

Pueblo Women's Knowledge: Voices of Resilience and Transformation  
in the Face of Colonization

By

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## ABSTRACT

My research focuses on Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges and the role of our knowledges as they relate to the future of Indigenous and Pueblo communities. My main research question is multifaceted—what is Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledge, how is this knowledge communicated and taught, what changes have occurred to those knowledges over time, and what changes have happened due to perceived and real threats. In answering that question, the sources used for my research include the qualitative data collected from personal interviews with Pueblo women, my literature review, and information that I know or have learned from personal experience, including my knowledge as a Pueblo woman.

My dissertation is in three parts: a journal article, a book chapter and a policy paper. The journal article responds to this question: How and in what ways have Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges been impacted, influenced or shaped by colonialization? I contribute to conversations about how colonization has impacted, influenced, and transformed Indigenous women's identities, knowledges, roles, and ways of living.

My book chapter takes a look at definitions of Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings from the perspectives of Indigenous and Pueblo women. The book chapter focuses on the modern day issues facing Pueblo women, specifically, how to ensure our survival and our Pueblo ways of life in the face of colonization. The book

chapter focuses on Pueblo women's teachings and knowledges as they are passed down from generation to generation. Those teachings have been key to our survival and key to maintaining our traditions, our language and our Pueblo way of life.

The policy paper discusses my views on the importance for Pueblo nations to adopt policies that protect Pueblo women which will protect and ensure the passage of Pueblo women's knowledges to future generations towards ensuring that Pueblo people continue to exist and be who we are, Pueblo people. In the policy paper, I also discuss what well-being or health means and how that relates to the importance of adopting policies to protect Pueblo women from sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking and other forms of violence that may be used against Pueblo women in our communities.

## Preface

While researching and reviewing papers, notes and poetry I had written in my undergraduate studies, I found the following poem that I wrote sometime in 1971 while attending Bryn Mawr College, an all woman's college on the Mainline in Pennsylvania:

the ways of life  
so easy to see  
but is seeing really knowing?

Reflecting on that time and remembering that I was the only American Indian at that college, all alone in a foreign world and environment and being homesick for the Pueblo, for my relatives, for my family and for my life at the Pueblo, I see that I was doing a lot of thinking and questioning. I now can see that the Pueblo women's knowledge that was instilled in me carried me, helped me to get by, helped me to be strong. I would think about my grandmother and the blessing for protection that she gave me when I left and her reminder to come back home.

Reflecting on that poem brings me to dissertation topic and why I chose this topic. While at Bryn Mawr I saw a complete different way of life than what I knew. I saw a way of life that was foreign to me, that was filled with primarily rich, white, upper class women who lived in a world with a different set of cultural values that I was not familiar with. I come from a way of life that was very different, where we speak a different language and have different beliefs and cultural practices. I come from a way of life that has different cultural values and teachings that have been passed down over generations, primarily through Pueblo women's knowledges.

I ask the reader of this dissertation to ponder the poem I wrote in 1971, and the question posed as we move forward together through the journey of my dissertation and the teachings and learnings incorporated in this dissertation. I also ask the reader to revisit the poem after reading the dissertation and encourage discussion about what the question might mean to the reader and how it relates to Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges, and what is seen and unseen.

Considering what is not seen, leads to what is often not heard, the voices of the unseen or voices in the background. My dissertation is linked together through a common underlying thread of Indigenous and Pueblo women's voices expressing, sharing, and talking about our knowledges. The Indigenous and Pueblo voices within this dissertation are heard through stories and narratives that were collected within an overall story which describes how those voices and knowledges have been impacted by colonization and yet through their resilience, continue to be strong and recognized as the precious legacies that must continue to be passed from generation to generation to ensure our survival as Indigenous and Pueblo peoples. This research study was conducted with the hopes of bringing out the voices of Pueblo women to share how our knowledges and teachings are vital components towards sustaining and carrying forward Pueblo core values.

Within this overall story or narrative, I chose to conduct research that focuses on Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges, such as what is taught by Indigenous and Pueblo women to others and within Indigenous and Pueblo communities, the role of

women's knowledges (which includes information that may be held specifically by Indigenous and Pueblo women), and women's relationships to the future of Indigenous and Pueblo communities. While my research focuses primarily on Pueblo peoples, my work is also situated in a broader and globally relevant conversation regarding Indigenous women's knowledges, knowledge systems, communities, and ways in which challenges to women's knowledges and knowledge systems are being addressed.

I wrote the journal article to look at and share some of the ways that Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges been impacted, influenced or shaped by colonization. In the legal and community work that I have been involved in over the past 30 years or more looking at tribal community development and addressing violence against Indigenous women, Indigenous peoples, including Pueblo people and Pueblo women, I have been engaged in conversations about colonization and decolonization. Through the journal article, I contribute to these conversations by examining colonialist strategies that have impacted, influenced, and transformed Indigenous women's identities, including knowledges, roles, and ways of living. While I continue to learn from a multitude of Indigenous women from around the globe, my research interests focus on the colonial impacts on Pueblo women and communities, as well as local responses. There is not much literature that specifically focuses Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings. There are a few Pueblo women, Christine Simms, Anya Dozier Enos and Christine Zuni-Cruz, to name a few who have had books or articles published. Paula Gunn Allen and Leslie Marmon Silko are two Pueblo authors whose books I have read. There are other Pueblo women who have published their work in books, journal articles and other

publications.(Mary Eunice Romero-Little, 2010, Naranjo, 2017). More recently, valuable resources are now available through the work of those who were in the first Pueblo PhD cohort (Abeita, 2017; Lorenzo, 2016, 2017; Sanchez, 2017, Chosa, 2017, Suina, 2017) and other Pueblo scholars whose work has exponentially increased the number of resources that bring forward the voices, knowledge and experiences of Pueblo people.

Recognition of Indigenous epistemologies is central to my research so I looked to the tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005), which provided a foundational approach to my research study. Our histories or herstories, stories about where we come from, our origins are so important to shaping who we are and they provide vital information that reflects core values and lessons on how we are to live with each other in this world. It is my belief, which is expanded on through this research study, that the stories of Pueblo people that have been passed down from generation to generation, are key components of Pueblo women's knowledges. It is this transmission of Pueblo women's knowledge that has survived through the centuries of oppression and ongoing colonialization and that has been a key factor in our continued existence as Pueblo peoples.

Additionally, I included historical perspectives of the impacts of colonial events, that referred to the time periods before the Spanish and other colonizers came to Pueblo country and the time periods when the Spanish colonizers were settling in Pueblo country. I included a discussion of some of the points raised by Dr. June Lorenzo in her book chapter, "Using a Pueblo Chthonic Lens to Examine the Impacts of Spanish Colonialism on New Mexico Pueblos." I also included a brief discussion of two United

States Supreme Court cases, United States v. Joseph, 94 U.S. 614 (1876) and United States v. Sandoval, 231 U.S. 28 (1913) and how those cases may have also impacted Pueblo women and Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings.

I included a discussion that looks specifically at how Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings have been impacted by American educational policies and included references to some of the readings from my graduate courses. My journal article includes a reference to Romero-Little's 2010 article which discusses how the Pueblo community socialization process is central to Pueblo children's education and learning. Her article raises the continued need to have further discussions on the impacts on Pueblo women's teachings and knowledges by current educational programs in the Pueblos, such as the Head Start program.

Keeping in mind the voices of Indigenous and Pueblo women and how those voices are vital to the transmission of our knowledges and knowledge systems, my book chapter takes a look at definitions of Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges, teachings and knowledge systems from the perspectives of Indigenous and Pueblo women. The book chapter focuses on the modern day issues facing Pueblo women, specifically, how to ensure our survival and our Pueblo ways of life in the face of colonialism. My research focused on Pueblo women's teachings and knowledges as they are passed down from generation to generation. Those teachings have been key to our survival and key to maintaining our traditions, our language and our Pueblo way of life. Those teachings are now being attacked everyday as we struggle to keep our Pueblo languages while our children are learning to speak English, as we live with health issues



such as diabetes, obesity and cancer, and as we continue our dances and songs to ensure that we continue to be Pueblo people.

Pueblo women and other indigenous women around the world have had to be strong to ensure that our children and future generations are able to live and be indigenous in a world that continues to try to take everything away from us. The voices of Pueblo women give us continued strength, provide guidance and serve as reminders to Pueblo people that Pueblo women were given specific roles and responsibilities that we need to protect and carry forward so that we may continue to be who we are, Pueblo people.

The last part of the thread of voices expressing our knowledges is carried through in the policy paper which discusses my views on the importance for Pueblo nations to adopt policies that protect Pueblo women which will in turn protect and ensure the passage of Pueblo women's knowledges to future generations with the vision of ensuring that Pueblo people continue to exist and be who we are, Pueblo people. In the policy paper, I discuss what well-being or health means and how that relates to the importance of adopting policies to protect Pueblo women from sexual assault, domestic violence, human trafficking and other forms of violence that may be used against Pueblo women in our communities.

I chose this topic for my policy paper because of my personal experiences, as a Pueblo female, seeing that Pueblo women's voices are often silenced in some Pueblo communities or there is no longer an avenue for Pueblo women to have a say in the well-being of Pueblo communities. I would like to give hope to other Pueblo women that we

can make positive changes happen by creating awareness about the importance of our roles and responsibilities as Pueblo women to pass our knowledges and teachings down to future generations. Those valuable knowledges and teachings are derived from our core Pueblo values which we must maintain to continue to be Pueblo people. Our voices, as reflected in the underlying thread, are of vital importance to the overall well-being of our communities and our resilience continues to carry us forward despite the impacts of past and current colonization.

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I acknowledge the people in the community of Kewa (Santo Domingo) Pueblo. I thank my maternal grandparents, Benito Garcia and Catalina (Cate) Garcia who nurtured and inspired me to stay in school, to learn as much as possible and who reminded me that wherever I may travel to or live, my home will always be at Kewa, the place where I come from. I appreciate that my maternal grandparents both encouraged and supported my higher education aspirations and my learnings about being a Pueblo woman.

I acknowledge my paternal grandparents who taught me through example, how to be strong despite any challenges that may be before me. My paternal grandfather, Lorenzo Pajarito, was blind and was over 100 years old when he left this world. He always knew who we were, was happy when we visited him, and loved us. My paternal grandmother, Peregrina (Pacheco) Pajarito, always talked to us in Keres so that we had to learn to understand what she was saying to us. I acknowledge my aunties, my mom's sisters who may have thought that I wasn't learning or listening a lot of the time while I was growing up and even now, as I am still learning, every day, observing the changes in the world around, trying to be a good relative that will demonstrate that I did learn and continue to learn what is expected of me as a woman from Kewa.

I acknowledge the WK Kellogg Foundation, the Santa Fe Community Foundation, and Leadership Institute at the Santa Fe Indian School for the funding and support. I also acknowledge Arizona State University for providing a much appreciated fellowship and the Santo Domingo Tribe for the scholarships. I acknowledge Arizona State University and the School of Social Transformation for providing the Pueblo PhD program and the outstanding faculty who have challenged us, helped us to expand the plasticity of our brains, and who have also inspired, encouraged and supported us, so much gratitude to you! Acknowledgments to my doctoral committee: Dr. Elizabeth Sumida Hauman, Chair; Dr. Bryan Brayboy, Member and Dr. Mary Margaret Fonow, Member, who all inspired me, opened doors in my mind, and were instrumental in helping me to make sense of where we were headed with our PhD studies and dissertations.

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My dear sisters, Carlotta, Audrey, Gloria and Danell, thank you for your love and support, you are always in my heart and I am proud to be your sister. I acknowledge my mom who made sure that when we were growing up that we were frequently at Santo Domingo to receive the teachings and knowledges imparted by the women at Santo Domingo.

My extended family that I have created in my journeys around the world, especially those Indigenous women who I call "sisters", whose patience, whose advocacy and courage in the work to confront colonization and other isms have inspired me to believe that we can truly create positive social changes happen when we work together, collectively, thank you! And thank you to Gwen, Lisa, Corrine, June, Eileen! And I acknowledge those Indigenous women who have been silenced, abused, sexually assaulted, are being trafficked, are missing or who have been murdered.

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## **Journal Article – The Resilience of Indigenous and Pueblo Women’s Knowledges**

### **Introduction: Opening thoughts and reflections on Indigenous women’s knowledges**

Throughout my life, I have often found myself deep in thought about Indigenous women’s knowledges and the ways those knowledges have been impacted, influenced or shaped by colonialism. From that thinking, I began to ask: How and in what ways have Pueblo and Indigenous women’s knowledges been impacted, influenced or shaped by colonialism? When considering this research question and how to depict the colonial impacts without getting mired in the darkness, I sometimes became confused about how to proceed because I like to focus on the positives. At those times, I was brought into awareness of the world around me by other women reminding me that my grandmothers and ancestors are always with me and they will help me to stay mindful in my analysis and not stay rooted in the negative. With this journal article, I provide the reader with perspectives on some stark realities that Indigenous and Pueblo women have endured and how they have managed to maintain their resilience so their knowledges have continued to be passed down from generation, to ensure the survival and existence of Indigenous and Pueblo peoples.

I reflect on the current state of affairs that Indigenous women—Pueblo women, and Indigenous women around the world with their knowledges and teachings—are immersed in because of the severe and harsh impacts of colonialism and the ongoing cycles of conquest. I am interested in understanding their/our responses to colonization through the lens of our knowledges. I attempt to contribute to this conversation with my work by examining colonialist strategies, including “settler colonialism” as described by Patrick Wolfe (2006), that have impacted, influenced, and transformed Indigenous

women's identities, including knowledges, roles, and ways of living. While I continue to learn from a multitude of Indigenous women from around the globe, my research interests focus on colonial impacts on Pueblo women and communities, as well as local responses to those impacts.

In order to address the questions of how and in what ways have Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges have been impacted, influenced or shaped by colonialism and in deciding how to structure my research, I believe that the nine tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005) provide a foundational approach, where tribal epistemologies are central. Those tenets or principles or beliefs, listed below, resonated with me as I recognized how each one has meaning and has influenced or is in line with my research study about the impacts of colonization on Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledges or epistemologies. I perceive these tenets as a type of sounding board or touchstone that I looked to and reflected upon as I wrote this journal article:

1. Colonization is endemic to society.
2. U.S. policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain.
3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities.
4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
5. The concepts of culture, knowledge, and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.

6. Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.
9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (p.429-430)

A critical approach to understanding Indigenous women's knowledges starts with beliefs and stories about our origins and sources of life. Origin stories tell us how human beings were created and given the necessary knowledge and lessons for living on Earth. For example, the Haudenosaunee have origin stories about Sky Woman who came to the people with her knowledges, brought them the three sisters—corn, beans and squash—to grow and feed the people. Diné (also known as Navajo) people have origin stories about Spider Woman and White Shell Woman who taught the Diné how to live in this world. The Cherokee people have origin stories about Selu or Corn Woman who also gave gifts to the people with lessons on how to use them. Some Pueblo people have origin stories about Thought Woman, Elder Sister, and Younger Sister who also gave tools and implements to us, taught us how to farm, how to cook, how to make baskets, how to weave, and how to live in the fourth world into which we migrated. Indigenous women's

knowledges have been derived from these types of origin stories, which have female deities providing for the people and providing guidance for the people regarding how to live in this world. Those knowledges have been transferred and kept alive from generation to generation through stories, songs, dances, prayers and are demonstrated in the daily activities of Indigenous peoples as they live in this world from birth to death and on to the spirit world.

Further, there is archaeological evidence of societies in Europe that were Matriarchates or “Mother-rule” where “woman ruled; she was first in the family, the state, religion, the most ancient records showing that man’s subjection to woman preceded by long ages that of woman to man” (Gage, 1998, p. 13-14). Gage also described “African tribes swearing by the mother and tracing descent through her” (1998, p. 14) or how wives had authority over husbands by law “in honor of Isis,” a goddess, and that the Babylonians had the same laws. Eisler (1988) referred to those types of societies as “partnership models,” where women-ruled and there was peace in those societies, and where women’s knowledge was respected. Exploring these types of historical records, scientific evidence, and Indigenous oral traditions ultimately leads me to question how we have arrived at where we find ourselves today, and it is this question that drives my research.

Impacts or influences (historical and contemporary manifestations) of colonialist strategies on Indigenous women’s knowledges

Eisler’s work (1988) also explored this question, and theorized that major change in societies was prompted by a new “dominator model.” Colonialist strategies, whose

foundations originate from the dominator model, have been actively and purposefully wiping out Indigenous women's knowledges and replacing them with foreign knowledges, languages, and belief systems. Colonialism and oppression has been in action for centuries ever since the time when "might" took over "right," when the "dominator society" led by the Kurgans and then the Hebrew tribes "wreaked such havoc in Europe and Asia Minor" changing "partnership societies" into rigid male-dominated systems (Eisler 1987, p. 94-95). The emphasis in the dominator society was on power and control. It can be argued that today's world still operates under the dominator model and that many of the symptoms of gender oppression we see in societies, like violence against women, are key strategies of this model. For example, when I first read *The Chalice and the Blade* in the late 1990s, following a recommendation by one of the male allies in the work being done to address violence against Native women, I could see how the tactics of power and control used by male-dominated societies followed the same patterns of behavior use by abusers in controlling and oppressing.

I view the dominator model as linked with other theories of colonization that have been put forward by scholars, including the work of Paolo Freire. I had already read his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* many years ago and decided to read it again as each reading initiates new insights for me. This is what Freire had to say about cultural invasion:

Whether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion is thus always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality or face the threat of losing. In cultural invasion (as in all the modalities of antidialogical action) the invaders are the authors of, and actors in, the process; those they invade are the objects. The invaders mold; those they invade are molded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice—or are expected to follow it. The invaders



act; those they invade have only the illusion of acting, through the action of the invaders. (Freire, 1970, p. 133)

Indigenous peoples have suffered through several types of invasions, including the dynamic of cultural invasion described by Freire, which means we are still in the process of being invaded and dealing with the lasting legacies of colonialism and its current manifestations, like the push towards modernity—in which Indigenous peoples will almost always be left behind as the ill-suited for, contrary and resistant to, or unable and unequipped to meet (Sumida Huaman, 2015). Modernism is elaborated on by Linda T. Smith in her seminal work, where she argued,

The development of scientific thought, the exploration and ‘discovery’ by Europeans of other worlds, the expansion of trade, the establishment of colonies, and the systematic colonization of indigenous peoples in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are all facets of the modernist project. (Smith, 1999, p. 59)

Modernism came out of the Enlightenment period with the belief that “knowledge was to be discovered, extracted, appropriated and distributed.” This is contrary to the way Indigenous peoples would have conceptualized definitions and uses of knowledge. As a result of imperialist expansion, what we now see is how Western knowledge and science became what she referred to as the beneficiaries of the colonization of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, the knowledge gained by our colonizers has been used, in turn, to more deeply colonize us in what Ngugu wa Thiong’o called the ‘colonization of the mind’ (Thiong’o 1986). In my observations, this is most evident in the appropriation of Indigenous women’s knowledges, the exploitation and extraction of Indigenous knowledges, and the attempt to shape Indigenous knowledge or mold us (as described by

Freire) in ways that confuse and distance Indigenous peoples from their very origins.

Indigenous and Pueblo women are also dealing with “settler colonialism” which Wolfe describes as having two aspects: “Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base – as I put it, settler colonizers came to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.” (Wolfe 2006, p. 388). For example, when Spaniards came to the Americas, specifically by the time they arrived in the Southwestern United States, their intentions were to claim lands, to stay on the lands, and to live on the lands, whether or not those lands were occupied. Those engaged in settler colonialism had and continue to have the goal of eliminating the Indigenous peoples who live on the lands because “[s]ettler colonialism destroys to replace.” That type of goal meant that Indigenous and Pueblo women’s knowledge had to be destroyed and replaced with the settlers’ knowledge and ways of life.

Last year while attending the He Manawa Whenua Indigenous Research conference held in Aotearoa (New Zealand) I went to a breakout session called: It Has Been A Long Time Since the Women Have Spoken: Reawakening Indigenous Health Models as a Liberatory Praxis. The presenter talked about how the traditional practices, including roles of women and men in a matrilineal society, were changed after the introduction of Christian doctrines to their people. This had a negative impact on their own values as Chamorro people and negative impacts on the knowledges and teachings of roles and responsibilities of Chamorro women and men which teachings were pushed aside in favor of Christian values and morals. I recognized this is an example of how settler colonialism and colonization have impacted the Chamorro people as well as how

Pueblo women's knowledges have also been impacted as discussed below.

### **Impacts of Colonialist Strategies on Pueblo Women's Knowledges**

Within the cycle of colonialist practices, the goal of my dissertation research was to take a look at what happened and is happening to Pueblo women's knowledges. This is due in part not only to my reflexivity as a Pueblo woman researcher, which I describe in the methodology section of this article, but also due to the fact that there is very little research available on these questions by Pueblo women. The origin story shared in Gutierrez' book, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, sexuality, and power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, described how Thought Woman nursed the two sisters, an elder and a younger sister, taught them the language, and gave them baskets filled with gifts and lessons for the people (Gutierrez, 1991, p. 3). The sisters taught the Pueblo people their roles and responsibilities as women and men. Pueblo women were responsible for the home, grinding corn, cooking food, bearing and teaching their children, sewing, weaving, making pottery, and generally responsible for all activities within the home. Pueblo men were responsible for farming, hunting and defending the people of the village, activities outside the home (Gutierrez, 1991, p. 4-8).

There was a balance established between men and women acknowledged in songs, prayers and ceremonies with the message that everything was created either from Thought Woman or the Sun father. Pueblo women's knowledges were derived from the teachings of Thought Woman and the two sisters, which knowledges also guide Pueblo women to know their roles and responsibilities in Pueblo communities. June Lorenzo wrote about the role of the Pueblo female in her research and discussed the impact of the

Spanish colonizers on the roles of Pueblo women. She stated,

Earlier, I established that one distinguishing characteristic of Pueblo chthonic law traditions is the role of the female. Since women have always been contributing and important members of our Pueblos, and the female is central to many of our belief systems, including gendered analysis is critical for looking at impacts of the Spanish civil law tradition. As Pueblo epistemologies, and therefore chthonic traditions, evolve over time, they would necessarily include an examination of the role of the female. In Pueblo governance, for example, there is no separation between the sacred and the secular—often asserted by Pueblo leaders today—so conversations about governance will always include consideration of the role of the female...Socioculturally, Pueblo women have exercised roles in traditional Pueblo religions, in decision-making about food sustainability, and even in governance in some cases. In many Pueblos, women are the primary caretakers of traditional homes, which are often passed down from female to female. Additionally, it is commonly understood in Pueblo communities that clan mothers and women's societies exercise influence over family and community decision-making. Most importantly, Pueblo oral histories tells us that these roles and women's status have existed since before contact with Spain. (2016, p. 72)

The work of Pueblo scholars like Lorenzo is critical in reclaiming what can be learned through archival studies. We know that when the Spaniards arrived to Pueblo country in the late 1500s, they came with patriarchal beliefs that women had no value. This was because, at that time in Spain and Europe, the Inquisition was still raging, and millions of women were being condemned as witches and killed as the Catholic Church was strengthening its role as a powerful world force. Women found safety from the inquisitors by seeking the protection of their fathers and became the “property” of their fathers. It

would appear that there was no balance such as that originally idealized in the Pueblos regarding the roles and responsibilities between men and women in Europe. Men were the heads of households and women in their households were subservient (Gage, 1988). Upon arrival in New Mexico, early Spaniards were surprised to see Pueblo women with Pueblo men at meetings, and they did not understand why Pueblo men brought women to meetings, or why decisions could not be made without input from the women (Gutierrez, 1991). Not long after their establishment in New Mexico, the Spaniards would model a governing system foreign to the Pueblos that was based on Spanish/European ideologies of gender, placing men in positions of power to make decisions for the community and where women would not be allowed to attend the meetings or have a political voice.

### **My research study and results**

My dissertation research sought to find ways to contribute to this emerging knowledge through the narratives of Pueblo women viewed as “leaders” in their community today—a concept that I actually write about in depth in the book chapter section of this dissertation. In this journal article, I introduce my research study and provide some key findings that speak to how my participants in their current roles and capacities as Pueblo women understand the impacts of colonization on our knowledges and a few examples of what we are doing about it today.

### **Methodology and data collection.**

The following describes my philosophies about doing research and the methods I used to perform research for my dissertation. I also include an explanation of how I

relate to the topic of research. My vision for my own methodologies is also outlined here.

In my experience, life may be perceived from an “either or” perspective. It may be perceived as “hard and challenging” or it may be perceived as “beautiful” or as a “gift.” Along the same lines, research may be perceived as beneficial or not helpful at all. Of course, a discussion about research is not that simple because real life and research is complicated and often times difficult. I venture to say that people have a tendency to react and make judgments about certain concepts by determining whether those concepts have “positive” or “negative” impacts or implications. Research is subject to those judgments, reactions and perceptions. For example, Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2006) in her discussion of colonization of Indigenous peoples, stated that the “systems for organizing, classifying and storing new knowledge, and for theorizing the meanings of such discoveries, constituted research”. She further stated that the “instruments or technologies of research were also the instruments of knowledge and instruments for legitimizing various colonial practices.” She explained that through this type of research conducted by the countries who were making discoveries of the new worlds, which consisted of classifying Indigenous people along with the flora and fauna of a particular location, “[i]mperialism and colonialism are the specific formations through which the West came to ‘see’, to ‘name’ and to ‘know’ indigenous communities.” As an Indigenous researcher, I do agree that this type of research has had severe and long-lasting negative impacts and implications on the lives of Indigenous people.

So what does this all mean to me, a Pueblo woman? Readers of this dissertation may find that despite the common tendency to use a comparative approach that pits one

side against another side, my philosophies about research may not be that simple to some, yet to others may appear to be very simplistic. Therefore, I say to the reader, prepare yourself for a glimpse into this Pueblo woman's description of what her research philosophies are.

**Known relevant theories or concepts.**

But wait. Before we move in that direction, we must take a look at some of the known relevant theories or concepts that we read about, discussed and looked at regarding "research" or studies conducted about or with indigenous peoples, including those described by Maori scholar Linda T. Smith, Margaret Kovach, Robert Alexander Innes, Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, and Alice Keewatin. We look at these theories or concepts to get a sense of the "positive" or "negative" aspects discussed above and to prepare the reader for an insight into this Pueblo woman's perspectives:

Linda T. Smith's book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, was first published in 1999. A good friend of mine, Dr. Debra Harry, an anti-biocolonialism activist, advised me to read the book. I recall being intrigued by the many recommendations and statements made by Smith and agreed that the work of "decolonizing methodologies" around research was both timely and necessary. I read the book a few years after it was published, after I had been to Aotearoa (New Zealand), and after I had participated as a peer reviewer for the U.S. Department of Justice and read research grant proposals on violence against women issues. At that time, I was starting the work to "decolonize" and bring awareness around the sovereignty of Native women and Native nations as ways to bring peace back into our tribal communities and end

violence against Native women. Smith's book spoke to me and helped me to understand concepts around research of indigenous peoples and the impacts of colonization from my perspective as a Native women working to end violence against Native women.

Situating oneself in research and making preparations for research are vital parts of research about indigenous people as discussed by Margaret Kovach. She discussed how "self-locating affirms perspectives about the objectivity/subjectivity conundrum in research." For example, western research and scientific research methodologies have steered researchers towards a belief that for research to be valid, the research must be conducted objectively, in other words separate and apart from the objects of the research study. Kovach countered that, "within Indigenous inquiry, Absolon and Willett (2005) tell us that location is important. They remind us that self-location anchors knowledge within experiences, and these experiences greatly influence interpretations." She continued, "[l]ocation ensures that individual realities are not misrepresented as generalizable collectives." In other words, where we come from, where we live and who we are as Indigenous people must be included in setting the framework for research of indigenous people.

Robert Alexander Innes discussed the need for "ethical research" in his paper on aboriginal research conducted in Canada. He criticized Linda T. Smith's discussions and ideas around Indigenous methodologies and argued that she did not provide enough examples to support her theories. He stated that American Indian Studies (AIS) research must be "an undertaking held to the highest of ethical standards" and that "American Indian Studies methodologies have substance, ethics, accountability, and produce results



Native people.” Although I do not entirely agree with his conclusions regarding Smith’s book, I do agree that research must be ethical and that for research to be ethical, it should be conducted within the framework of what are considered Pueblo core values (discussed in the book chapter section of this dissertation).

Anyone interested in conducting research on tribal lands would do well to take into consideration the tenets of Tribal Critical Race Theory, “TribalCrit” described by Dr. Bryan Brayboy, especially in light of the realities of life experienced by Indigenous peoples. One’s research lenses are modified by each of the tenets. For example, the first tenet of TribalCrit addresses how Indigenous knowledges were dismissed by the colonizers, whose intent was and continues to be, to put their systems of knowledge and education in the place of our Indigenous knowledges. This is not a new idea, but it is paramount to understanding the legalities of knowledge regulation in the U.S. today. Furthermore, each of the other eight tenets provides guidance and insight to inform researchers as they create their own frameworks for research. The tenets help to set the context for what research should occur and resonate with my Pueblo understandings of research, including demonstrating respect.

The concept of “balanced research” as described by Alice Keewatin, a non-Native woman, who commenced her study of Indigenous people in an aboriginal community by “following the scientific method housed in the western worldview” and then concluded with proposing that we make “a shift in our way of being, so that we live in balance with all of the realms of the world around us rather than dominating those realms,” which will “allow us to be open to the knowledge needed to survive on this planet” and that the

“traditional knowledge systems of indigenous people may hold the key to that survival.”

Alice had studied and learned in college that the scientific approach to research, which includes being objective or in other words, being distant from the subjects being researched was the way to conduct her research. When she attempted to use that approach in an aboriginal community in Canada, she did not obtain the cooperation of the people she wanted to study. She had to learn from the indigenous people in the community, the Indigenous people who were the proposed subjects of her research and from her family, and that a “framework for conducting research within balance” was what she had to work from. She experienced the “process of conducting research within an indigenous paradigm.” I agree that research must be conducted within an indigenous paradigm and discuss this more fully in the next section.

### **My methodological contribution.**

So how does this all connect with my work and the shaping of methodology? I start from where I come from and from my Pueblo perspective which includes Pueblo core values that were instilled in me from my conception and growth in my mom’s body, to my first breath as I entered this world as a newborn infant from my mother’s womb, and the values that continue to be instilled throughout my life journey as a Pueblo woman. The core values I talk about include respect for all life, generosity and sharing, acknowledging relationships to each other and all life, love, compassion, faith, understanding, spirituality, balance, peace and empathy. These are core values shared by most, if not all, of the Pueblo nations and are usually expressed through one’s tribal language, one’s relationship to another person and the way a person behaves to another

person on a daily basis, and in our narratives.

The stories I have heard growing up have shaped what I know about who I am, how I am supposed to behave, why I am supposed to behave in certain ways and how I am supposed to be respectful in relation to all life around me. Some of those stories are expressed in prayers, songs, and in storytelling. It is good to know that there are values that are strong in our Pueblo nations that guide behaviors, interactions and relationships to all living beings.

It is good to know that as human beings, we have spiritual support all around us all the time. It is good to know that I know where I come from, who I am and that I have relatives and there are people in the community who support me. It is safe to know those things. It is bad to know that there are people who do not adhere to Pueblo values that guide our behaviors and conduct. There are some things that I do not need to know at Kewa Pueblo, and I respect and understand that. I create a space for knowing by being open to learning, being aware of opportunities, being more aware of my surroundings and the people around me, being more mindful and respectful. Those core values guide my behavior, my actions and my research approach.

### **Connecting back to theory – directionality.**

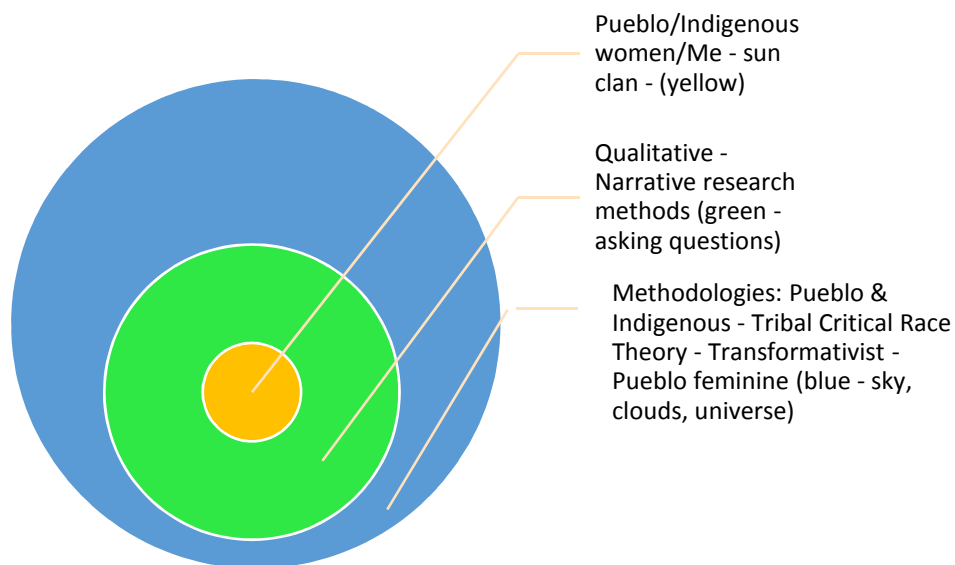
From a Pueblo woman's perspective, there is a connection between methodologies, the methods which are used to conduct, approach or define research, and theory that leads to the question about where is this headed or what is the purpose? Why do we do research and why am I, a Pueblo woman, doing research? Where am I headed?

It is important at this point to acknowledge that there were connections to my research that had already been completed prior to commencing this dissertation. During the course of my doctoral studies, I also made connections to the theories and concepts that I read about in the various classes. I conducted research about indigenous women, specifically Pueblo women and their knowledges. I am a Pueblo woman. I know many Pueblo women and we have an established commonality or connection through our Pueblo values and Pueblo way of life.

In addition, my Pueblo colleagues and I entered the Pueblo PhD cohort at Arizona State University with the understanding that our research would be conducted as our way to give back to Pueblo communities. Our primary audience is Pueblo people, and other audiences include those in the academic arena, the general public, and the greater universe. My dissertation includes findings from my research and will hopefully ignite further discussions and further research by others who seek to uncover buried truths. I refer to truths that have been buried, ignored or changed by those who have been involved in colonialist practices. For example, a buried truth might be that Indigenous women were actively and public involved in making decisions that guided the Indigenous community, which was a common practice in matriarchate societies. This type of truth has been buried and replaced by patriarchal beliefs that Indigenous women had no role to play when decisions were made regarding an Indigenous community and that it was Indigenous men who made all of the decisions and were the only leaders.

Most of my life has been full of asking questions and seeking answers to situations that I feel have been unjust and that I have either witnessed, been part of, or

been subjected to as an Indigenous woman. I have often wondered, have asked why this situation is happening, and have sought to find the origins or reasons for the unjust situation in the hopes of making changes for the better. For example, I have been actively involved in addressing violence against Indigenous women for over twenty-five years. I have learned that acts of violence committed against me and other women around the world are not justified. In my search for reasons why these acts of violence are happening, I have looked at root causes and have gained a better understanding of how to address violence against Indigenous women through processes of social change. I have learned that after uncovering buried truths, the next step is to raise awareness so that we may move forward in the universe, in our Pueblo communities, to maintain who we are as Pueblo people honoring and respecting Pueblo women and Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings. The following diagram provides an overview of my research approach and methodologies [Figure 1]:



The yellow circle in the middle represents me as an Indigenous and Pueblo woman. I chose yellow for this circle because I am of the sun clan. The green circle represents the type of research that was conducted – qualitative – which included asking questions or the interviews with my Pueblo women participants. I chose green for this circle because in a type of “personalities by color” test that I have used in facilitating strategic planning sessions, green was my prominent personality color and represents a personality that looks at the big picture and asks lots of questions. The blue outer circle represents the methodologies used in my research study. I chose blue because it represents the blue sky, clouds which bring rain and snow, rivers and lakes, and the universe.

#### **Context of the research/research background.**

My research includes original fieldwork and data collection, as well as archival research and policy review, and extensive review of the literature. I selected a qualitative approach to my research and decided to do narrative research, which I determined is appropriate for my research study for the following reasons. Narrative research allows for extensive narration of life stories and experiences from participants (Creswell, 2013). In narrative research, participants are asked broad questions, where the focus is less on addressing punctuated questions and allows for more of a free-flowing conversation that is not restricted by the interviewer, interview scripts, or time. I chose this type of research as I agree with the procedures for implementing this research as described by Creswell to include: “focusing on studying one or two individuals, gathering data through the collection of their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (or using *life course stages*)” (p. 70, Creswell, 2013).

Some of the features of narrative studies described by Creswell also resonated with me and those features include:

- a. the *collaborative* nature of this type of research where the researcher and the individuals who are interviewed collaborate on an overall story. This type of collaboration is reflective of the Pueblo core values of sharing, learning, listening and teaching and may also be seen as an example of how Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledge is transmitted, through storytelling.
- b. Narrative stories come from individual *experiences* which may "shed light on the *identities* of individuals and how they see themselves." In my research study, the focus is on Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledge and an integral aspect of this study is to take a look at the identities of Indigenous and Pueblo women and how they see themselves as their stories will be reflections of their own experiences along with my own experiences.
- c. Narrative stories are often shaped by researchers into a *chronology* which fits into how my research questions are focused as the questions I asked about the individual's life experiences included their past, present and thoughts for the future.
- d. Narrative stories "occur within specific *places* or *situations*." In my research, I asked individuals about events that have occurred which included descriptions of places or situations that are very important to describing the context around Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledge.

The narrative research that I chose is informed by oral history that comes from the stories of the Pueblo women that I interviewed and autoethnography, which reflects my own personal story.

I determined that narrative research would be the best fit for obtaining a large part of the data to support my dissertation because this type of research provides a means for gathering the stories or detailed “life experiences” of several individuals which were used to “restory” or strengthen Indigenous and Pueblo women’s knowledge through the three main sections of my dissertation. When I commenced my research, I was aware that there might be challenges in using this type of research and kept in mind some of the questions raised by Creswell such as who owns the story, who can change it, what happens when narratives compete and as a community, what do these stories do for our community? (p. 76, Creswell, 2013). Narrative research was also the best fit for me because, as I stated previously, storytelling is a vital aspect of what Indigenous and Pueblo women’s knowledge is and how it is transmitted.

I worked with adult Pueblo women from three different generations or general age groups (grandparent, parent, and youth) to learn how they identify, define, and practice teachings of Pueblo women’s knowledge and knowledge directly related to their roles as Pueblo women

After first asking questions designed to build rapport with my research participants, I asked questions that touched on the following points:

- Definitions of Pueblo women’s knowledge
- Teaching of Pueblo women’s knowledge



- Practice of Pueblo women's knowledge
- Sites of Pueblo women's knowledge practiced?
- Language and knowledge
- Impacts to Pueblo women's knowledge (i.e. through colonization, learned behaviors, etc.)
- Survival of Pueblo women's knowledge
- Definitions and practices of leadership (by Pueblo women)

### **Study participants and recruitment.**

My study involved four participants total, three women and me as the fourth voice running throughout the research (and subsequently in this dissertation). The participants were given pseudonyms and no names of their Pueblos of origin have been used. The only identifying features provided in this dissertation are their age generations—grandmother, parent, and youth. The youth generation included a Pueblo woman in the age group between 18-34 years. The parent generation included a Pueblo woman in the age group between 35-55 years. The grandparent generation included Pueblo women in the age group from 56 years and older. The generational approach was chosen as a way of looking at how Pueblo women's knowledges are transmitted over at least seven generations, considering the legacies of grandmothers through the succession of the following generations. Grandmothers have their life experiences and knowledges that they learned from their mothers and grandmothers which covers three generation. Grandmothers are, generally, in the role and have responsibility to provide guidance and share their knowledges, most often through storytelling, and to consider what their

legacies will be for future generations. The parent generation, in their role, have the responsibility for being there in the present time to provide support and teach children, nieces and nephews. The youth generation's role and responsibilities are generally to listen, to speak up, to be actively and to continue learning from their parents and grandparents. For purposes of this research study, I designated those between the ages of 18-34 years as the "youth generation" because my research study did not include minors, those under the age of 18 years old who are considered to be "youths".

As this is a narrative study, the focus was on fewer participants with as high quality of interview time and intimate interaction between participants and researcher. Ultimately, my expectation was to spend time, including several interviews and participant observations with each participant to draw out biographical stories and to ensure that participants felt comfortable with how they were to be portrayed in the research. The study also involved reflections on informal time with each participant, which was part of maintaining rapport and allowing for a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and participant to emerge. This means that as an Indigenous woman researcher, I am also interested in how my work can contribute to participant lives and priorities, in ways that they can identify with me.

I recruited participants through prior knowledge and familiarity with them and through face-to-face interactions. As a Pueblo woman with a long history of experiences—by nature of being the first attorney (male or female) from Santo Domingo Pueblo (Kewa) and having served in leadership positions in community-based organizations in the state—my strategy of recruitment was to provide information on this

study through in-person conversations with Pueblo women considered highly regarded by a number of Pueblo communities and organizations to gain possible participants. The final sample included Pueblo women who have been or currently are serving in the following roles:

- a) Pueblo leaders (in elected political positions, educational, health or other positions);
- b) Pueblo women affiliated with any number of family and gender equality organizations in the state (e.g., affiliated with the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native women, Tewa Women United, or the Leadership Institute at the Santa Fe Indian School, or those I know personally).
- c) Pueblo women involved with Indigenous community-based programs and initiatives (including those who have both local and international involvement).

This research also included my autobiographical narrative based on my experiences as a Pueblo woman in community-based organization leadership and as an attorney who has worked in human rights and Indigenous rights nationally and internationally. My autobiographical narrative and personal reflections are included in addition to the in-depth interviews collected from participants. This research study consisted of working directly with Pueblo women individuals, it does not purport to represent any one or all Pueblo communities, and no data collection took place in any Pueblo communities or on reservation lands.

#### **Data analysis and writing.**

The data collected from this research study is being used in my doctoral

dissertation towards completion of the Ph.D. program in Justice Studies in the School of Transformation at ASU. It is my understanding that the research will be used for publication, including a journal article and book chapter, conference/presentations, and where any reports or publications will also be released to the participants of the research as well as made available to Pueblo communities in New Mexico (while keeping strict confidentiality of the research participants) at their request.

I wrote my comprehensive exam essays with the intention of using the exams as the drafts for my journal article and the book chapter which were essentially drafts for my overall dissertation. When I wrote the comprehensive exams, I kept in mind the intention of adding and expanding those drafts after I completed the interviews and data analysis. I received so much valuable information through the interviews that I found it was sometimes difficult to narrow it down for inclusion in my dissertation.

I focused on data collection, specifically conducting interviews with Pueblo women, from 2017-2018, and this does not include the time spent years prior to getting to know them and working with them in other settings. Logistically-speaking, two of the Pueblo women that I interviewed had such busy schedules, we had to look at several possible dates and locations for the meetings and interviews. Transcription support was provided to our cohort program through the university, and I was ultimately very pleased with the results I received. After I received the transcribed interviews, I reviewed them while listening to the recordings to check for accuracy and for items that the transcriber might have missed or misunderstood. I then analyzed the data using four of the analysis methods—constant comparative analysis, member checking, keywords in context and

content analysis--outlined by Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2007). I also reviewed notes from my personal journals, papers I have written over the years for various classes and incorporated my reflections into this dissertation.

### **Research Limitations/challenges.**

I originally wanted to interview a larger number of Pueblo women for this research study and was limited in my resources and time. When I started this PhD program, I was working full-time and was financially stable. That changed during the last year and a half of the program when I became unemployed. I knew there would be costs related to traveling to locations to meet with my interview participants. I also knew there would be costs for providing food because it is common courtesy to provide food at meetings between Pueblo people and Indigenous people. It is also a way to thank the participant for their time and contributions to the research. Even though I was not working full-time, I was doing consultant work to earn money to pay my bills and was very stretched financially. The financial support that I received from the university definitely made a huge difference in getting me through those days when I was feeling so stressed.

Another limitation was the need to keep the names and Pueblos of my research participants confidential. Two of the participants talked about how Pueblo women's voices are not being heard because of the impacts of colonization. I have a lot of respect for the Pueblo women who participated with me in this research study. For safety reasons, because of potential backlash or potential attacks on the characters of my Pueblo interview participants, it was decided to continue with identifying them with

pseudonyms. Currently, the world we live in is not a world where Pueblo values are practiced by all Pueblo people so there is the real possibility of harm.

The use of the English language was a limitation at times because the English language does not fully reflect the nuances, tones, meaning of certain words that are best said in the Keres language or in an Indigenous language.

The use of academic language and terminology was a challenge for me throughout the course of my PhD studies and writing this dissertation. For example, I often had to look up essential terminology such as epistemology, ontology, methodology, and methods to ensure that I was not mixing up or not using these words correctly. I wrote my dissertation with the audience of Pueblo community people in mind and knowing that most people in the Pueblo communities are also not familiar with academic language and terminology. I was also mindful that the journal article audience will include academics who do understand the terminology.

An additional limitation that I took into consideration included my own safety considerations when discussing decolonization and what it means, deconstructing patriarchy and issues around violence against Indigenous and Pueblo women.

## **Discussion**

### **Bringing forward herstories.**

I would be remiss not to mention in this dissertation the work I have been exposed to as an Indigenous doctoral student, scholar and professional or the work that I have been involved in over the past 25 years or more looking at tribal community development and addressing violence against Indigenous women, Indigenous peoples, including Pueblo

people and Pueblo women. In these many years, I have been engaged in conversations about colonialism and decolonization, and these too are resources I drew from for this dissertation. Through this particular section of my dissertation, this journal article, I contribute to these conversations by examining colonialist strategies that have impacted, influenced, and transformed Indigenous women's identities, including knowledges, roles, and ways of living. While I continue to learn from a multitude of Indigenous women from around the globe, my research interests for this journal article focused on colonial impacts on Pueblo women and communities, as well as local responses. Although there is not much literature that specifically focuses on Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings, there are a few Pueblo women authors who have had books published, which I look to as examples of Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings in literature.

Specifically, Paula Gunn Allen and Leslie Marmon Silko are two authors whose books I have read. There are other Pueblo women who have published their work, such as Mary Eunice Romero-Little (2010) who wrote,

what happens in the early years of life is crucial to cultural formation—traditionally, these are the family's years during which they give children the cultural and linguistic tools and know-how to function successfully, and to live harmoniously in the world of home and community. (2010, p. 4)

Her work on education is a critical piece in examining Pueblo women's knowledge and what is at stake when it is impacted by colonial forces. She talks about the importance of Pueblo children being with their families in their early years to receive their cultural and linguistic teachings. She essentially discusses how policies of the United States and

programs like Head Start or early education programs are taking children away from their families at times when they should be at home receiving the tools to learn about being a responsible Pueblo person.

More recently and adding to the conversation are the valuable resources now available through the work of those who were in the first Pueblo PhD cohort at Arizona State University (Abeita, 2017; Lorenzo, 2016, 2017; Sanchez, 2017) and other Pueblo scholars who supported their work (Dozier Enos, 2017; Naranjo, 2017), which has exponentially increased the number of resources that bring forward the voices, knowledge and experiences of Pueblo people. Our histories or herstories, stories about where we come from, our origins are so important to shaping who we are and they provide vital information that reflects core values and lessons on how we are to live with each other in this world. As I have stated before and will repeat throughout my dissertation, it is my belief that the stories of Pueblo people that have been passed down from generation to generation are key components of Pueblo women's knowledge. It is this transmission of Pueblo women's knowledge that has survived through the centuries of oppression and colonialism and that has been a key factor in our continued existence as Pueblo peoples.

I ask the reader to be patient with the interlooping of narratives and examples and stories in this journal article. The connections are there and may appear to be confusing at times, that is because oftentimes, that is just the way that some stories happen, how they reflect the journeys that a person takes and often comes back to the same point but



from a different perspective, that is my perspective from my experience as a Pueblo woman. This leads to the next description of an approach, or mirrored aspect that I decided to incorporate in this journal article.

I used a perspective I learned from looking at a medicine wheel, which reflects, like a mirror, a view of the ongoing cycle of life and reflects the transformative energies in the world, in a mutli-dimensional view. In engaging my research question, I felt it was also important to consider time—to take a look at the past or *yesterday*, historical or “herstorical” events, the present or where we are *today*, where we are headed in the immediate future, referred to as *tomorrow*, and the *future*, where Indigenous women might envision ourselves in the long term.

To explain this a little more, I became intrigued with this type of perspective about 18 years ago when I started doing presentations on “Herstorical Perspectives on Violence Against Women” and facilitating strategic planning sessions. I even visited the Medicine Wheel National Historic Landmark in Wyoming to obtain a deeper understanding of the concepts associated with the medicine wheel.

When I first started doing work to raise awareness of violence against Native women, my friend Marlin Mousseau from the Lakota Nation, did a presentation explaining several historical events and their impacts on Indigenous peoples. He recommended reading these two books: *The Chalice and the Blade: Our History, Our Future* and *Woman, Church & State*, to obtain a more thorough picture of historical changes that have had devastating impacts on the safety of Indigenous women.

The approach I am taking by looking at time is also connected to the seasonal

cycles that the world goes through every year and the cyclical nature of the energies that we live within and acknowledge, either consciously or unconsciously, with every breath we take. It is fascinating to be aware of how certain events have had such long-lasting impacts, both devastating and/or positive, on the lives of Pueblo women and the knowledge we carry. Later in this dissertation, specifically in the book chapter section, I discuss Pueblo women's knowledge and/or teachings more in depth. I refer to origin stories as some of the places where Pueblo people look to for guidance, especially when looking at where Pueblo core values came from and how those core values are being passed down over the generations. This is a sociocultural perspective. Throughout this journal article, however, I emphasize the perspectives of Pueblo woman on how taking action to learn, to share, to protect, and pass on Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings, give me hope that Pueblo people will survive the world where colonialist policies, behaviors and teachings have already made changes in Pueblo lives.

Additionally, historical perspectives of the impacts of colonial events must also be considered and necessarily include the time periods before the Spanish and other colonizers came to Pueblo country and the time periods when the Spanish colonizers were settling in Pueblo country. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of work like Dr. June Lorenzo's in her book chapter, "Using a Pueblo Chthonic Lens to Examine the Impacts of Spanish Colonialism on New Mexico Pueblos," as well as exploring United States Supreme Court cases, such as United States v. Joseph, 94 U.S. 614 (1876) and United States v. Sandoval, 231 U.S. 28 (1913) and how those cases may have also impacted Pueblo women and Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings. In the Joseph

case, which was decided in 1876, Pueblo people were not considered to be “Indians”. At that time in the history of the United States, Indigenous peoples who were considered “American Indians” were being sent to boarding schools, taken away from their homes, away from the places where children’s identities were being shaped and formed. By 1913, when the Sandoval case was decided, the movement to take Indian children away from their homes was in full force and effect. The Sandoval case determined that Pueblo people were indeed “Indians” and this was the beginning of the imposition of the many policies that were in effect towards American Indians, and that included the beginning of the time when Pueblo children started being forced to attend American schools either in their Pueblo communities at day schools or at boarding schools away from Pueblo communities, away from their Pueblo families, and away from Pueblo relatives and away from places where Pueblo women’s knowledges and teachings were being passed forward.

### **Pueblo women’s knowledges and colonization.**

In this section, it is time to look at the impacts of colonization on Pueblo women’s knowledges. I describe first the way in which my participants, my Pueblo sisters, believe our knowledges have been impacted by colonization. I then discuss some of the additional ways they outline we have been impacted—bodies, education, and through policy.

Regarding colonial impacts on our knowledges, in one interview, the grandparent generation Pueblo woman leader shared the following:

I think it’s [Pueblo women’s knowledge] been impacted for

the last 500 years, since the coming of the Europeans and colonization, when they refused to recognize the role of women, especially women that belong to a matrilineal society, matriarchal communities like mine. Because they refused to acknowledge that based on their own way of thinking and their own culture. It has, over many hundreds of years, really *diminished and eroded and minimized the role of women*. Yeah, it's been impacted in a really negative way for us. Even though I don't think it's destroyed it completely, I don't believe that. I think we still have a huge role. It's just been put in the back. So it's something that I don't know if we've been able to help just because our men have been brainwashed. [Ann, my emphasis]

In relation to settler colonialism, the parent generation Pueblo woman leader had this to say:

There's been a lot of influence of the colonial experience that has taken away power from women. Like you can see remnants of how important women are in our community. And yet, there's this deep struggle to allow women their power, their voice and their strength. For me, those interpretations, those impacts come from this colonial experience of violence, of suppression, of wanting to terminate. So basically to terminate and practice genocide was around the rape and the assault, right. To breed out Native-ness in a scientific way...*Also the intellectual erasure*. Our voices aren't in historical documents. That's an intentional invisibility. It's an intentional getting rid of. And that leaves interpretation for others to have. Our men, white people, scholars, whatever. Because if it's not in our actual voice or in our actual writing or all of those things, then it becomes someone else's interpretation. I feel like all of that has happened. [Tina, Pueblo B, my emphasis]

I have had similar thoughts over the years regarding the diminishment, erosion and minimization of Pueblo women's roles. It is significant that we take a look at Pueblo women's knowledges and how those knowledges, which are such a vital aspect of

matrilineal societies that existed way back when and continue to exist in most of the Pueblos today and how colonial policies made direct hits on our knowledges and roles. As the grandparent generation Pueblo woman leader stated, major changes to our roles and responsibilities within Pueblo communities happened when the Spaniards arrived over 500 years ago. The Spaniards came to our Pueblo world and from their patriarchal lens, did not see Pueblo women, did not see Pueblo women matriarchs refused to hear our voices. I think from that lens and perspective, perhaps the Spaniards felt justified in filling a hole they saw in Pueblo governing systems, and established the governmental systems that are currently in place in some of the Pueblos, modeled after their own types of governing systems, where only Pueblo men may be appointed into leadership positions as Governors, Lt. Governors, tribal officials and other positions. By doing this, Pueblo women's voices, contributions and knowledges were in a way, placed on the back shelf or the back of the room, where they continued to exist but over the years started to erode, diminish and be minimized.

And then from the parent generation Pueblo woman leader the significance of her sharing is that if Pueblo women's voices and knowledges are not being heard, that when the time comes for our voices to be heard, our voices and writings are not acknowledged or recognized unless they have been interpreted or introduced by men, White people, scholars, researchers, and others who are not Pueblo women. Pueblo women's knowledges and voices have been silenced and Pueblo women's roles in contributing to decisions that are being made for the welfare of the entire Pueblo were minimized and it will take a considerable amount of time and effort to address what has happened over

these past hundreds of years.

***Women's bodies.***

Spaniards brought the influence of the Church with them, and Franciscan friars established churches and introduced new belief systems to the Pueblos that denigrated and diminished women, of course entrenched in patriarchal policies (Gage, 1988; Lorenzo, 2017). Pueblos had been matriarchs, where the primary identity of the children was derived from the mother who had authority over the home or household. Under patriarchal beliefs and systems, men were considered the heads of households or the leaders of the community and Pueblo women's knowledge capacities were not given as much weight in decision-making for their own communities as they had been before the colonizers from Spain started settling in Pueblo country (Lorenzo, 2017).

An additional impact on Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings was that Pueblo women were no longer safe in their homes or villages. Andrea Smith's *Conquest* described that "[i]n the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin." (2005, p. 10). She explained that since "Indian bodies are 'dirty', they are considered sexually violable and 'rapable,' and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count" (2005, p. 10). Gutierrez touched on this by presenting the accounts of Spanish colonizers who expressed views on the promiscuity of Pueblo women—that Pueblo women did not care that they were married and would have sex with whomever they wanted—and the raping and enslavement of Pueblo women (Gutierrez, 1991). In response, Lorenzo (2016, 2017) described laws that Spain

enacted to these kinds of accounts, specifically those by Franciscan friars who were tasked with protecting Pueblo and other Indigenous women from rape and slavery by the colonizers, which Lorenzo argued implied that rape and slavery were indeed happening so calling into question Spanish ideas of Pueblo women's promiscuity. I see the attack on Indigenous women's sexualities and beings as a critical example of colonial impacts on Pueblo women's knowledge. When a woman is raped, her sense of identity, self, beliefs, knowledges and spirit are severely traumatized, which results in intergenerational trauma.

Parent generation participant, Tina, also shared her views on how Pueblo women's knowledge of bodies has been impacted by colonization. This is what she had to say regarding the impacts on sexuality and gender:

For me, especially around sexuality. Because genocidal practice was sexual assault, was rape, was murder, was intentional ripping out of babies, was miscarriages, everything. So our sexuality and our practice. With Christianity we have men marrying women and all of this stuff. But really, was that the practice? When you look at other ancient cultures around fertility or around creation and procreation, it's not just this one relationship, it's multiple relationships. Then you get to the interpretation of well like, "This is your kid"...When males assert their power, then you can get that tracing. But if you didn't, then you would only really know who the mother was. You wouldn't necessarily really know who the father was. For me, that's a really interesting place to address because we get into this place of "women who have multiple partners are sluts." Men who do, are more masculine. There are all of these different things. How did that come to be and what's the interpretation?...Then this place that you have to be with one partner to the end. We know that different cultures existed where they had multiple marriages, they had multiple partners, or they didn't have marriage at all in the interpretation of Christianity. There's not a whole lot of references, other than when the Roman Catholics came in or the Spanish came in, for that interpretation. So really, was this what Pueblo people practiced? We're in climates

where we're half naked. You know there wasn't a sexualization of people's bodies, and now there's a sexualization of people's bodies. All of those things make me think and hypothesize: Was this really our practice? Was this really the way it was? Was there rape and assault and all of this stuff in our communities before colonization came through? People tend to say, interpretations tend to say, "Yes, there's always been violence in human populations." But who's interpreting that?...I think there have been a lot of ways that we've lost a lot of information because women's voices were silenced, because women's voices aren't captured by those that were coming through. When my great-great grandmother talked about the shifting of leadership based on season, they talked of the shifting of leadership with clans. So it's like a fluidity of power. Like power was never concentrated in one particular entity or deity because we all need everything to live. The sun plays a role. The plants play a role. The animals play a role. We can't just survive on the sun alone. The plants need to be able to process the sun's rays into the oxygen that we breathe, releasing these different carbons that then feed another ecosystem. To me, that makes more sense...The fluidity of power and the fluidity of roles and responsibilities, where we didn't have one role being better than the other, but all were needed in order for the community to survive, which didn't make men more powerful than women, didn't make women more powerful than men. I feel that's why we have so many spirits that we pray to. So many, from the rocks, to the river, to the mountains, to the clouds, to the sun. We are praying to all of these things because all of those things hold the ability to give us life. It's not just one particular... women carry life but they cannot create life on their own. There's a place or a piece of the male that they need in order to do that...The expression of gender is a whole other topic. Biologically, physiology, we need a male and a female part, the egg and the sperm. The expression of gender and all of those still exist. I feel like a lot has been lost and people are interpreting now, but that means questioning. "Women don't do that. Women can't vote. Women can't hold leadership. Women can't do this." I'm like, "Ah, but who really says that?" There's a whole lot of power that women hold as well as men. For us to make the best decisions for our families and our communities, I feel we need male and



female voices. We need elders and youth. We need a whole lot more voices than just a few.

Tina points out how colonization, with Christianity playing a huge role, changed the way that Pueblo people viewed sexuality, particularly by imposing a rule that marriage could only be between a man and a woman. This is an example of patriarchal policies that were brought by the Spaniards and reflected the policies being imposed in Europe during the time period of Spanish colonization of the Americas. In Dr. June Lorenzo's article, she states "According to church doctrine, women were meant to primarily serve men and to be chaste. So Pueblo women, who knew and lived indigenous epistemologies honoring female deities, were subjected to an entirely new paradigm about the status of women in religious life." (2017, p.77). This is significant because those types of patriarchal policies were the beginning of the diminishment of Pueblo women's status and roles, which in turn had an impact on Pueblo women's knowledges and voices. Tina also raises questions that I have also raised in my work addressing violence against Indigenous women. Was there sexualization of Pueblo women's bodies before the Spaniards came? Was there rape and assault of Pueblo women prior to Spanish contact with the Pueblos? Those are important questions in the work to create social change in our communities because they lead us to where we are able to sort out the truth and reality of Pueblo life from our own Pueblo perspectives and get to the root causes of behaviors that have been adopted over time that result in disrespectful behavior towards Pueblo women.

As Tina points out and I agree, there is a fluidity of power in the natural world where all living beings or entities exist in interdependent relationships with each other. I

also believe that Pueblo people know about the fluidity of power because of the prayers, songs, dances and stories that we have practiced and continue to practice to acknowledge and thank all life around us. One might deduce that these are evidence of Pueblo beliefs of pre-colonial gender relations and norms. The impact on Pueblo women was that rules were imposed, based on patriarchal beliefs and attitudes of the Spanish colonizers and Catholic missionaries, that began restricting what Pueblo women were allowed to do and not do in their communities, creating mixed messages that continue to confuse Pueblo people today. I have experienced the same dilemmas at various points in my life and have asked the same questions about why are the voices of Pueblo women, youth and elders not considered when making decisions regarding the welfare of the Pueblo community?

### ***Education/teachings.***

After the Spaniards arrived in Pueblo country, the balance that existed between Pueblo women's knowledge and Pueblo men's knowledge started to shift and change through three waves of colonization and oppression under the Spanish first, then Mexico, and finally and currently, the U.S. During the third wave of colonization, and by the time the U.S. determined in the 1920's that Pueblo people were "American Indians" (we were not classified as such prior, see discussion above regarding the Joseph and Sandoval U.S. Supreme Court cases), Pueblo people became subjected to larger federal policies targeting American Indians, including education. The overall federal objective was to acculturate American Indians so that they would disappear into American society, giving

up our lands in the process. During the major boarding school era, American Indian children were taken away from their homes, away from their families, and placed in boarding schools (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006).

When our children are taken away from their homes, from the places where they are taught who they are, who their relatives are, their roles and responsibilities and their connections to the rest of the community, they missed out on vital socialization. The socialization process is central to Pueblo children's education and learning as members of their own communities, which is what Romero-Little's work has outlined for us specifically with regards to the Pueblos (2010).

When we look at the lives of Pueblo people, a child's identity within one's Pueblo village is taught on a daily basis from Pueblo women—mothers, aunts, grandmothers—and is reinforced each day by the rest of the community. The Pueblo child learns their Native language through this process of socialization, which is an essential part of our every day and our spiritual life. For example, when a child is taken to the plaza (central space in the Pueblo community) by his or her mother or maternal relative, greetings are exchanged in the Pueblo language that reflect the relationship between each other and generally acknowledges where they are. This interaction puts each person in a physical space within the world. This type of exchange takes place to reinforce the value of respect that is demonstrated to one another. I believe that the Pueblo educational process takes place on a daily basis with every breath that a person takes, whether awake or asleep, and the teachings through the transmission of our knowledge continues until we leave this world.

United States policies and programs have brought the HeadStart program into Pueblo communities as well as other Indigenous communities. Many American Indian tribes, in their support of the education of pre-school children, have either established HeadStart programs or send young children to nearby HeadStart programs. Romero-Little discussed the impacts of the HeadStart programs, which usually do not reinforce local cultural teachings and languages. She observed,

Children take on the values and behaviors of those who socialize them early on. There are vast differences between societal beliefs and Pueblo beliefs regarding human relationships and whether the individual or the community should come first. To Pueblo people, there is no contest. The community always comes before the individual, and Pueblo people regard as inappropriate and even offensive, the individualism and competition that so often figure in human relationships in the larger society. (Romero-Little 2010, p. 11)

When children take on dominant values and behaviors and are not physically present to benefit from the teachings imparted by Pueblo women, there can be shifts in the values and behaviors of the people overall that distance community members from each other and what might be viewed as life goals for a healthy community.

However, Pueblo nations, including my own, have been exploring these types of realizations, including questioning the impacts of sending our young children to HeadStart, especially as Pueblos experience language shift and loss and as young children are no longer speaking our Native languages. The young ones are speaking English and although they may understand their Pueblo language (Keres, Tiwa, Towa, Tewa, or Zuni), they are choosing to respond in English. When this happens, the relationship between all community members and Pueblo knowledge used to sustain

ceremonies and even daily life are threatened.

Another threat within the educational process for Pueblo children has been the rapid influx of technology such as cell phones, the internet and access to social media. There are concerns about how technology is quickly becoming the source of education and teachings for Pueblo youth as expressed by the youth participant in my study:

I think growing up in the '90s and early 2000s, our generation was at a point where TV, movies, music, all of these things in the media, were just starting to explode and be consuming for all the population during those times. I think for me personally, I didn't pay attention to a lot of knowledge growing up. I was there. I would go home but I wasn't always paying attention...Westernization, colonization, the media machine, all of these things have consumed us to a point where we're forgetting different things. Grinding corn. I know that we don't grind corn like we used to for our cornmeal because people will use a food processor or a blender to grind their corn. My mother does it! And my grandma did it. Her sisters do it. That's one huge example of how that women's knowledge is being lost to colonization. And grinding corn is such a huge, important task. It should be a sacrifice that us women do with our time because we need that cornmeal to pray for everything, for all of us. So yeah, that's one huge way that it's [Pueblo women's knowledge] been impacted."

Corn is a staple of Pueblo life, not only because we eat it, but also because of its cultural significance. Grinding corn is a Pueblo woman's gift that was provided to us, Pueblo women, with specific lessons that have been passed down from generation to generation on how it is to be done. There were three grindstones in my maternal great-grandmother's home, which was next door to my maternal grandmother's home. I remember there were usually lots of women who were there grinding corn together, talking, sharing stories, sometimes singing and laughing together. I watched them and

had my turns in grinding corn and was encouraged by the feeling of belonging and sense of responsibility that came with this important Pueblo woman's task. These everyday activities of the women, being in that space, as a group, demonstrate an important way that Pueblo women's knowledges are created and sustained.

It is concerning to hear that some Pueblo women have adopted the method of grinding corn using food processors or blenders and I surmise that there might be quite a few Pueblo women who are doing this. When this happens, it takes away from the times and occasions where Pueblo women's knowledges are taught and passed on to younger generations of Pueblo women. And in using a blender to grind corn, which is so sacred to Pueblo people, there is the tremendous risk that the younger generation of Pueblo women will come to prefer that method of grinding corn and will lose out on the precious teachings and knowledges that go hand in hand with grinding corn on a grindstone with other Pueblo women.

I need to add here that after this interview, Mary talked to her mom and other female relatives and they decided to stop using food processors to grind corn and they had a discussion about the importance of using a grindstone and in grinding corn together as a way to continue the passage of Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings.

***Policies: Relocation and assimilation.***

One of the most impactful United States' policies on American Indians was to assimilate and relocate, including Pueblo people, into American society. This meant that Pueblo families were encouraged to go away from their home communities to live and

work in locations within large metropolitan cities like Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver and Albuquerque. When we were away from our home Pueblo communities, we were away from Pueblo women's knowledge that was being taught in the Pueblo.

My personal example demonstrates how that United States policy had an impact on my exposure to Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings. I was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico because my dad, after returning home after his service in the U.S. Navy, took a full-time job at Sandia Base that is located in Albuquerque. Despite living about 40 miles away from Santo Domingo Pueblo, my mom and dad took us to the Pueblo as often as possible to participate in Pueblo community events, dances and family gatherings. I am grateful for those occasions because those were times when I learned the foundations of Pueblo life and learned about Pueblo values. My older sister was fortunate to have lived with our maternal grandparents during her early childhood and the early years of my parent's marriage and adjustment to life in Albuquerque. She benefitted from being immersed in the Pueblo community, learned the Keres language at an early age and is still fluent in the language. Going back and forth between the Pueblo and the city placed us in environments where Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings were intermittently shared and learned, primarily happening when we were at the Pueblo. I learned enough of the Keres language to get by for daily communication, for common Pueblo protocols and practices, and for participation in most Pueblo ceremonies. In addition, I was fortunate to have spent a couple of my summers during my teenage years at my maternal grandmother's house and learned a lot from my grandmother and

maternal aunts during those timeframes. My brother spent a lot of time with his cousins and uncles at the Pueblo and learned the language. My next younger sister lived at the Pueblo a couple of her high school years and also learned to understand the language and speak whenever necessary. Our two younger sisters did not have that type of experience although they do remember some of the teachings and lessons imparted by our maternal grandmothers and other female relatives. They both say that they do not understand most of the Keres language and do not feel comfortable at the Pueblo because they do not have a good understanding of things that take place at the Pueblo, especially regarding Pueblo women's roles and responsibilities.

The youth generation Pueblo woman leaders shared her perspectives on the impacts of policy in her life:

I was born actually in xxxx, California. My parents met there. My mom was there for school, and my dad moved to California when he was older. So I was born in Oakland when my mom was in school out there. We moved home to [the Pueblo] when I was about ten months old. I was born in 19xx, so that big earthquake happened. We survived through that, I guess, and my mom decided to come back home. Her and my dad separated, so then we came back home and lived with my grandma...When I started kindergarten is when I moved to Albuquerque. We would always go home any time there was anything cultural going on, or dances, feasts, or even just birthday parties and family get-togethers were always at home at my grandma's house. So we would be there a lot. I would also spend summers with my cousins and my aunts. I would go to the rec program there [at the Pueblo]. Every summer I would spend a good amount of time there too. But it was split between Albuquerque and [the Pueblo]...My mom worked a lot. She did her best to balance that. She worked really hard, she is very successful in her career. She did what she needed to do to provide and to survive and to provide for her children, for us. On balance, we went home [to the Pueblo] when we could, but we weren't there every day.



There were things that we missed. So there's always a trade-off somehow, which is sad. So we were on our own and in town, in Albuquerque, so we couldn't always...Thinking about it now, if we had lived in [the Pueblo] and she had been working, it might not have affected us as much. But because we did live in Albuquerque and she was working, we were latchkey kids. We'd take the bus home. We were very independent, my sister and I. I think just wishing she was there, not having her there because she had to work. I think that's some of the harder things. Then also with my dad not being around either. Those were also hard things. (Mary, Pueblo C)

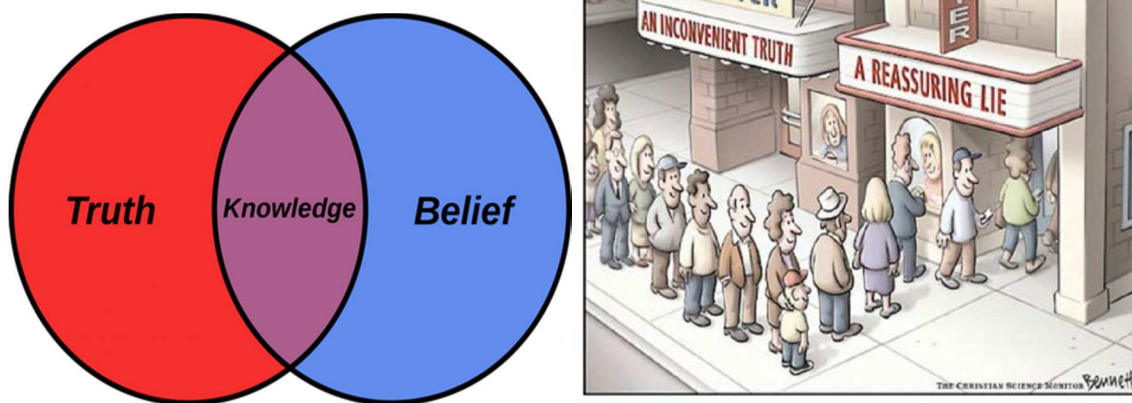
As the reader can see from these examples, Mary's experience and my family's experience, the United States policies that encouraged American Indians, including Pueblo people, to move away from their home communities, to get jobs outside their communities have made it difficult for Pueblo women's knowledges to be passed on and for Pueblo languages to be learned. The overarching United States policy, which is taught in most American schools, and is directed towards all people within its boundaries, emphasizes that all people should be law abiding citizens of the United States, without considering the unique nature of American Indian and Pueblo Indian nations and cultures.

The following diagram reflects my concerns about what could possibly happen or has already happened to Pueblo peoples. We are taught that where truth and belief overlap, we find knowledge in the middle. In the cartoon on the right side of the interlocking circles are people lined up to go into the theater where the show is "A Reassuring Lie" and there is no one going into the theater where the show is "An Inconvenient Truth". We live in a world where most of our Pueblo children attend schools where they learn reassuring lies. I get concerned that if our Pueblo children

children are not imparted with Pueblo women's knowledges and are not taught the truth which is connected to our beliefs and values that they too will join the line to enter the theater to see and believe in the reassuring lies that are being spread by the colonizers.

Figures 2 & 3.

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### **Indigenous/Pueblo responses to colonial impositions from positions of strength & resiliency**

As an Indigenous Pueblo woman actively involved in working on women's issues in relation to our communities at local, national, and international levels, I continue to assert that we cannot get mired in the past. We can and should understand what has happened, yet need to look at what is currently happening and then with prayer and positivity, keep doing the work we are doing because, if anything, our knowledges include teachings on strength and resiliency. Pueblo women are taught by older Pueblo women to carry forward the hope of future generations as we put our plans in motion to realize what we can do tomorrow to reach our visions of the future. And there is so much positive movement; connections are being made, Indigenous women and Pueblo women are

producing important work. Based on what participants shared with me throughout my research, I present the following key themes that address how we can and are responding to colonial impositions through learning spaces, language and giving back, and hope and innovation.

### **Affirming learning spaces.**

In response to the years of our children being taken away from their primary learning environments, away from Indigenous and Pueblo spaces and the knowledges women impart to them at different stages of their lives, we can also borrow from radical scholarship and male and female scholars, Indigenous and non-Indigenous who have pushed back against the oppressive trends of dominant society. For example, Ivan Illich's work deconstructed the concept of "childhood" where children became placed in a status they did not typically hold in many Indigenous societies. Based on his work in Latin America, he had observed that there was no distinction in the *home/community* educational process between a child who was 3 years old or a child who was 7 or 13, for example. The learning process was consistently iterative and took place for all at the same time without separation based on age boundaries, at recurring times during the year, and where children learn to be purposeful within the local context (Illich, 2000, p. 27). He further argued that people learn most of what they know outside of school, hence his radical call for the de-institutionalization of society, including what he called deschooling society.

This decades-old argument is relevant to Pueblo nations. Pueblos have endured the Spanish Conquest and survived, have maintained their identities under Mexican rule,

and now face the hardest test of all, whether they can continue to be Pueblo people when confronted with the dominant system of education in the U.S., especially involving schools that employ teachers who usually have pedagogies inconsistent with Pueblo values, cultural beliefs, and behaviors. I pose that Pueblo people have been able to survive by being able to keep children within the Pueblo communities where they are socialized as Pueblo people—learning their Native languages, how to behave towards one another based on our values, and developing identities as Pueblo people. Central to this process is the role of women’s knowledge in community spaces. And these knowledges for Indigenous people cannot be sustained in schools unless curricula are purposefully changed, teaching methods and teachers revisited, schools and learning environments re-envisioned.

This is possible, and there are examples of Indigenous language immersion schools that have been created around the world to reinforce the role that Indigenous languages plays in the transmission of Indigenous women’s knowledges and teachings. Locally, the Keres Children’s Learning Center at Cochiti Pueblo is one example and their mission reflects the drive to maintain distinct Pueblo ways of life:

Keres Children’s Learning Center (KCLC) strives to reclaim our children’s education and honor our heritage by using a comprehensive cultural and academic curriculum to assist families in nurturing Keres-speaking, holistically healthy, community-minded, and academically strong students. ([kclcmontessori.org](http://kclcmontessori.org))

The KCLC recognizes that learning happens within the home and community environment, and the school serves to reinforce Pueblo values (and not the other way

around) that are transmitted by Pueblo women—mothers, aunts, grandmothers.

**Reclaiming languages, voices, and giving back to community.**

Globally-speaking, in Aotearoa (New Zealand), Māori are addressing the impacts of colonization on their ancestral knowledges and languages through systemic change and the use of Māori language narrative as curriculum (Skerrett and Ritchie, 2014):

Maori language re-generation is enabling (children can re-interpret and verbalize their worlds through ancestral language and thought). It allows different stories to be told. It provides the tools of critique—making it possible to consider other likelihoods. When the intergenerational transmission of *te reo* Maori is ensure, then language shift (from Maori to English) will have ceased. (Skerrett & Ritchie 2014, p. 134)

Further, the revitalization of Māori language through Kohanga Reo (language nests) necessarily involves the role of women as caregivers who nurture infants, toddlers, and children in Māori-run early childhood educational settings. In Latin America, women's movements also provide inspiration regarding the active embracing of women's roles and knowledges regarding self-care and community care. For example, after reading *Embodied Protests: Emotions and Women's Health in Bolivia* (Tapias, 2015), I can more deeply recognize the organizing efforts that Indigenous women have been involved in as embodied protests. We take ourselves to Global Indigenous Women's Caucus meetings at the United Nations, to education and awareness events in our communities, to women's support groups and to other places where we share with each other, teach each other and learn from each other.

As part of my doctoral coursework, I came to know professor Angela Gonzales

(Hopi) who shared her knowledge and insights in Wilma Mankiller's edited volume:

At Hopi, the women put so much of themselves into feeding the people, especially during the dances. When we are having tribal dances in the village, all the women come together to support one another and to cook for other families. One of the interesting modern adaptations is that women who are now working outside the home don't have time to make traditional Hopi breads, so a cottage industry has sprung up where some women make the bread and sell it by the box to the women who are too busy to make it themselves. When I was in graduate school in New York, I related to a friend of mine how much I enjoyed going home, and getting there with my twenty-five-pound sack of Blue Bird flour, and making big vats of bread dough. One summer I actually got tendonitis from working the dough so long. My friend from graduate school said, "Oh Angela, you just don't realize the bonds of your own oppression." And I thought that was such an interesting perspective. In Western culture, that is the way it would be perceived. Feminists would come in and ask, "Why are you in this subservient role?" ...I have often had trouble with feminists who come into our community and see us working in complementary roles and assume that because we provide food for the people, we are subservient to men. We do these things for the benefit of all. It is an important role to be able to work with other women in a supportive way to provide food for the people. It is a respectful thing. In times past, men and women worked for the benefit of everyone in complementary, balanced relationships. If that means that men sometimes do certain things and women do certain things, it is for the common good. (Gonzales, 2004, p. 109)

Pueblo women's knowledge is demonstrated through Gonzales' observations that the perceived "work" being done by Pueblo women is not considered a hardship because it is completed for the "benefit of all" and those who participate in these tasks derive benefits that cannot be measured. I have heard and learned that type of lesson throughout my life in prayers, in places where Pueblo women gather and work hard preparing food for

ceremonies and feasts. We were taught to do these things because those are our contributions to the collective community and those lessons were provided to us through the stories shared by Thought Woman and the two sisters and our female ancestors.

### **Hope and innovation.**

Colonialism's goal has been to transform Indigenous and Pueblo people into American citizens, to erase our existence, and despite that goal, Indigenous and Pueblo women's knowledge has survived, survived and continues to adapt and transform to meet the challenges of colonialism. Here I find that theories of plasticity of the brain as described by Doidge (2007) are useful, because this means to me that mental colonization is not permanent, and at a personal level, especially as I grow older, I continue to learn and to work because there is still so much to do. I believe in possibilities, and I am a true believer in change. When I read about how our brains adapt and that there are corresponding parts of our bodies that reflect those adaptations, I gain renewed hope for positive possibilities for what we know as Pueblo women to flourish and to be reinvigorated. We can also take heart from the awareness that we have vast abilities to develop responses to colonialism:

Indigenous innovation is a move from the margins, a response to a great collection of challenges—historical, contemporary, and unanticipated—that we share together in this world...Indigenous innovation is distinctive, *already at the center*, as theory, process, and practice that is a) driven by Indigenous people (i.e., who are accountable to local community; b) seeks to restore, reclaim, protect, maintain, and revitalize local Indigenous knowledge linked with Indigenous cultural practices and languages; c) draws from local Indigenous knowledge systems; d) is equipped to conscientiously respond to imperialisms and their strategies, including colonization and capitalism; e) creates

spaces where metanarratives are problematized, approaches evaluated and reevaluated, and tensions appropriately addressed; f) opens, expands, and rebuilds connections with other knowledge systems (i.e., western modern science); h) is concerned with how Indigenous people have benefitted and for how long. (Sumida Huaman 2015, p. 5-6)

The future of Pueblo women's knowledge depends on our young women, our youth who are navigating a world where colonialism is in their faces yet also a world where our role as older Pueblo women is to show them the path to take for continuation and survival of Pueblo people. Seeds are planted, as Thought Woman taught the sisters, to grow and nourish the people. In Pueblo Country today, I see the seeds of our future as a people planted in places like the Brave Girls (an out-of-school program for Pueblo and Indigenous girls started by one of my Pueblo cohort colleagues, Dalene Coriz, eight years ago) gatherings at the Santa Fe Indian School, an historical Indian boarding school. I am inspired to hear how these high school girls are learning to be strong, learning to carry forward information and understandings as young Pueblo women—gaining our knowledge and teachings because they knowingly embrace their responsibilities to Pueblo communities. It is encouraging to hear how they demonstrate our Pueblo community values through their generosity by giving back to Pueblo elders, by volunteering at food banks and serving food to those in need in their communities.

Over ten years ago, some Indigenous women started taking their daughters, nieces, sons, nephews, and other young relatives with them to meetings at the United Nations. Now those youth have established their own Global Indigenous Youth Caucus where representatives from countries whose colonialist practices are still in place hear their voices. The Leadership Institute at the Santa Fe Indian Schools (LI), a Pueblo Indian



community development organization, regularly sends two Pueblo youth representatives to the annual United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) gathering in New York to learn, to observe, to participate and most of all, to nourish connections made by Indigenous peoples around the world who are responding to colonialist policies.

Last year, a few of my Pueblo colleagues and I attended the He Manawa Whenua Indigenous Research Conference in Aotearoa (New Zealand). It was good to be with Maori people and Hawaiian people who are strong in song and dance. Those songs and dances have carried them through the onslaughts of colonization and continue to keep them strong collectively. We felt that strength every time they sang or danced and I recognize that strength in our songs and dances, in our language and in the way we relate to and behave towards one another based on our Pueblo core values and principles.

I am always grateful and feel blessed to know that Pueblo peoples are resilient and are survivors. We have been able to maintain who we are despite the impacts of colonization brought by the Spaniards, the Mexicans and now the American way of life which has brought the English language, American schools and histories, and other trappings of American society including food, music, values and behavior that is usually in great contradiction to the Pueblo way of life.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, some of the prominent themes that surfaced in my research are listed here,

- Shared stories about the importance of being near one's maternal relatives as much as possible to learn what Pueblo women's knowledge is

- despite the impacts of colonization, Pueblo women's knowledges continue to be purposely transmitted although in competition with technology such as cellphones, the internet and social media
- Pueblo women are concerned about the survival of Pueblo peoples
- Pueblo women's knowledge is directly connected to Pueblo languages as there are concepts that cannot be translated into the English language
- Pueblo women are leaders (though concepts and definitions of "leadership" can be different for Pueblo women – this is explored in more detail in my book chapter)
- Young Pueblo women are aware of changes that are happening and are looking to restore or reclaim ways of doing things to ensure that Pueblo values are being practiced in the community

I would hope that my research could have implications for discussion in our communities on the impacts on Pueblo women's teachings and knowledge of current programs in the Pueblos, including education-focused programs such as Head Start. It is my hope that by writing this dissertation that other Pueblo women may be inspired to take action that will ensure that Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings are protected, safeguarded and shared with Pueblo people because such action is necessary for our futures and existence in this world as Pueblo peoples.

### **Past, Present, Tomorrow, Future.**

Despite my emphasis in other areas of this dissertation on the idea of Indigenous women's knowledges as a type of corpus local knowledge, I also believe that Indigenous

women's knowledges are constantly transforming and adapting as the world around Indigenous women changes and transforms, as Indigenous women ourselves are transformed. As a basis for my own understanding of Pueblo women's knowledge, I continue to reflect on the lessons passed down from my female relatives to me and those lessons shared each time Pueblo women get together to cook, to prepare food for ceremonies, to sit, visit, laugh and cry together.

The past or history of colonial events, policies, and practices is often seen or evidenced in the present world. I marvel at the stamina and strength of Pueblo women who continue to work as hard as they can to feed their children, now more often not only being a mother to her children but also being a father because the child's father is absent. I also often look around the Pueblo community and marvel at how much has changed and how much has remained the same, and I am grateful. I find myself getting fearful that "the Pueblo is changing" and evolving not necessarily of our own agency but due to colonialist policies and practices. I pray that we will be able to survive and continue to live as Pueblo people.

I get stronger with the knowledge that Pueblo women's knowledge and that which has been shared by other Indigenous women are there to support me, to provide guidance, and to sustain me. I have learned much from the past—my community's past and my own, and now that I am a grandmother, I can share what I know with my grandchildren. They are the ones who I am grateful for as each "tomorrow" comes with the sunrise. My grandchildren are the future of our people, and it is my responsibility to do as much as I can to prepare them with lessons I have learned that will help them to use their Pueblo

and Indigenous thinking, ideas, and lifeways to continue to be Indigenous in spite of the ongoing colonial goals to eradicate us. Thinking about the future, I am hopeful that other Indigenous and Pueblo women will be mindful as well as inspired to think about and create ways to ensure that the way that Pueblo women's knowledges are transforming is within the context of Pueblo values.

**Book Chapter – *Can You Hear Us? Do You See Us? We Are Here! Our Indigenous and Pueblo Women Knowledges & Teachings Are Alive!***

I begin this book chapter by focusing on the following questions: How are Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges conceptualized, and what are the ways in which Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges and teachings rejuvenate and sustain? These questions comprise the core of what I wanted to learn in my dissertation research and remain essential to the way in which I think about the dynamic of Pueblo women, our knowledges, challenges to what we know and teach, and our roles as Pueblo women leaders.

As I sit here, thinking and contemplating how to create a response and proceed, how to craft together what I know and believe and what I have learned in my research, my prayers are answered by knowing that my answer is not going to be as straightforward as I planned, which is good and okay. It is out of respect for my ancestors and those aspects of Pueblo women's knowledge or Indigenous women's knowledge that my answer begins in this way. My quest for answers begins by also sharing a short poem from Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* (1986, p. 1.) This poem provides lessons from the feminine perspective, from a Pueblo woman's perspective, and is as an example of Pueblo women's knowledge. I learned that there was a beginning to all life, and in Pueblo stories, the commonality was "Thought" or "Thought Woman," so the words in that poem provided the impetus for creation, for learning, for the energy to acknowledge, share and learn as much as I could about Indigenous women's knowledge and teachings.

Ts'its'tsi'nako, Thought-Woman,  
is sitting in her room

and whatever she thinks about  
appears.

She thought of her sisters,  
Nau'ts'ity'i and I'tcts'ity'i,  
and together they created the Universe  
this world  
and the four worlds below.

We live in a world of change and transformation, and as an Indigenous woman, as a Pueblo woman, I need to acknowledge, be respectful and thankful for the wonderful and gifted insights, words, lessons and perspectives of Indigenous women and Pueblo women from whom I have learned so much and relied on through the tough times and the good times in my life. In this work, I have therefore chosen to highlight characteristics of Indigenous women's and Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings that I have come to understand through personal narratives, and the sharing of words, experiences, reflections, and insights from Pueblo women leader participants in my study.

So, it is only right to begin with a reflection on Thought Woman who has provided a very basic yet vital lesson for me—to be very mindful of my thoughts and to be aware of the words that are expressed from those thoughts. There are many stories about Thought Woman and the lessons she brought to the Indigenous people, now commonly known as Pueblos<sup>1</sup>, who were given languages, names, and places within the world to live—where Pueblo positionality was established. As a result, this book chapter provides a glimpse into my own positionality and development as a Pueblo woman while

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<sup>1</sup> *Pueblo* is the Spanish word for "town" or "village". It comes from the Latin root word *populus* meaning "people". Of the federally recognized Native American communities in the Southwest, those designated by the King of Spain as pueblo at the time Spain ceded territory to the United States are legally recognized as Pueblo by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There are 21 federally recognized Pueblos that are home to Pueblo people. (yahoo.com)

discussing how I view Indigenous women's knowledge using scholarship derived from both literature and oral tradition. Important to note is that this work relies on community resources and what is learned in Pueblos, which is not only an appropriate way to frame the work first but also speaks to the lack of literature on Pueblo women. I also discuss the Pueblo women's knowledge to deepen the local contextualization of this work before moving on to discuss how Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges relate to others—how and why I believe they “rejuvenate and sustain” in multiple realms.

### **Positionality and Origins**

#### **My positionality.**

I am from Kewa also known as Santo Domingo Pueblo. I am of the sun clan. My mom is the eldest daughter in her family and she has three younger sisters. My mom is about 10 or 15 years older than her younger sisters. See picture below [Figure 4]:



Left to right: Aunt Marie, Aunt Caroline, my mom Andrea and Aunt Emily. Photo by P. Bird taken in 2004

My maternal grandmother was Catalina (Cate) Garcia. She was born in the early 1900's and lived until she was close to 96 years old. She had eleven children, six daughters, five sons, three children died while young and one son was killed while serving in the armed forces during World War II. She was married to my maternal grandfather Benito Garcia

who was a traditional leader in the Pueblo, a farmer, a cattle owner, a keeper of horses, and a businessperson who built and owned a small grocery/dry goods store in the Pueblo village.



Left: Catalina (Cate) Garcia, right: Josefita (Cate) Reano (photographed by P.Bird from photo in family home at Kewa, original photo taken by a visitor to the family) [Figure 5]

My paternal grandmother was Peregrina (Pacheco) Pajarito. She was born in the late 1800's and lived a long life, close to 100 years. She had seven sons and one daughter. She was married to my paternal grandfather Lorenzo Pajarito who was over 100 years old when he left this world.



Left: Peregrina (Pacheco) Pajarito, right: Lorenzo Pajarito, photo taken by family friend in front of their home at Santo Domingo Pueblo [Figure 6]



I have an elder sister and three younger sisters. My elder sister lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, while my younger sisters live in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho, New Mexico. I share this information about my family members to provide some context and preparation for what I discuss in this book chapter, because when I learned about the following stories, they answered a lot of questions I had growing up and continue to answer questions and help me to better understand the dynamics of relationships between my immediate maternal aunts, my mom, my grandmothers, my sisters, my cousins, and other female relatives and the teachings or learnings that have occurred over my life time and are still occurring.

In some Pueblo stories, Thought Woman created an elder sister and a younger sister who were tasked with the responsibilities for giving people various tools and other gifts and were also tasked with the responsibility of teaching the people how to use and respect the various tools and gifts. When I first heard this origin story while attending college, I was intrigued about how different it was from what I was taught by the Catholic priest in my Catechism classes and what I had learned in school about how the world had been created, where the people on earth had come from, and the role of women in this world. In Pueblo stories, I learned that women were the primary knowledge keepers and teachers and had the responsibility, from the time of creation, to teach the people what they needed to know to live in this world according to the values given to them by the elder and younger sisters.

My surprise was that I had not made the connection earlier between stories and daily life, and that it took years for me to learn and deepen the connections between the

stories, songs, prayers, dances, and lessons provided by my aunts and female relatives to shape who I am as a Pueblo woman. I am not fluent in my Indigenous language, which is known by English speakers as Keres and is spoken among five southern Pueblos in New Mexico. I surmise that while a young girl, I understood more of the language than what I know now, so that the stories about the two sisters, described in Silko's poem, were part of my daily upbringing and were shared during occasions when women were together, and I was listening and learning.

Unfortunately, those precious times of learning were interspersed with times of family violence and trauma, and I do not recall much of my childhood because I chose not to remember as my way of surviving. Today I am in the process of re-learning the language and recognizing how feminine aspects of life, women's knowledges and teachings, are acknowledged and given respect through the language. I now have a deeper understanding of the significance of Indigenous languages as one of the best teaching tools for learning how to live one's life according to Pueblo core values, which connect our origins as Pueblo peoples with gifts we have been given by the Creator. These gifts include our lands, our languages, our spiritual practices, and are starting to enter the literature and be described more deeply (Chosa, 2017; Sumida Huaman, Chosa & Pecos, forthcoming; Zuni Cruz, 2017), and it is my hope to contribute to these understandings by also including women more deliberately in the conversation.

I also have a better understanding today of what it meant when my mother and my maternal aunts would say that they were not able to explain some things in English, and they wished I could speak and understand our language. I have a better understanding of

the importance of positionality—meaning, of knowing where I come from, of knowing who I am, and of learning more about the sacredness of Pueblo women’s knowledge and teachings, and how all these things are related to my professional and research life.

Despite not being more fluent in Keres, Pueblo core values were instilled in me from my conception and growth in my mother’s body, to my first breath as I entered this world as a newborn infant from my mother’s womb, and those values have continued to be instilled throughout my life journey as a Pueblo woman. Those core values are expressed in the Keres language, in the songs, in the dances, in the everyday conversations that I hear, and in the behavior of people around me as we interact with each other, as we move through the community and the world around us. In addition to the belief that Pueblo people hold that core values are gifts from the Creator, core values are also personal—meaning, necessary to maintain by individuals, and the core values I talk about include respect for all life, generosity and sharing, acknowledging relationships to each other and all life, love, compassion, faith, understanding, spirituality, balance, peace and empathy.

### **Study and Methodology**

From a Pueblo woman’s perspective, there is a connection between methodologies, the methods which are used to conduct, approach, or define research, and theory that leads to the question about where is this headed or what is the purpose? Why do we do research and why am I, a Pueblo woman, doing research? Where am I headed?

One morning, as I went on one of my regular runs, I thought about these questions with each step. I reflected on the years that I have been involved in creating awareness around violence against indigenous women as a means to end that violence. I reflected

on where I am now and what I had been doing while working at Kewa Pueblo and more recently, how involved I have become in the Pueblo community, my home. Working on what some people call “women’s issues” has been my passion and continues to be my passion no matter what type of job I have held. Starting and maintaining the Kewa Pueblo women’s coalition, “Women’s Voices” has been a great achievement. Women’s Voices is a group that brings women from the Pueblo together to share and discuss ways that we can contribute to our families and our community through sharing of knowledge and hands-on issues like nutrition and diet in the Pueblo. Women’s Voices is one of the reasons why I am in this Pueblo PhD cohort, why I am learning about research, why I am preparing to conduct research, and why I am no longer intimidated by doing “research” because this research is connected to writing and writing is an avenue where Pueblo women’s voices may be heard in a safe and respectful context. In my dissertation research, I chose to use the narrative approach because of my belief that our Indigenous and Pueblo women’s voices should have an avenue to be heard and expressed.

In 2015 at the start of my doctoral studies, I decided to conduct research about indigenous and Pueblo women’s knowledges. I was able to complete this research in 2018, and this book chapter is part of the dissertation that resulted from this work and from a lifetime of prior knowledge and experience as a Pueblo women’s advocate. I am a Pueblo woman. I know many Pueblo women and we have an established commonality or connection through our Pueblo values and Pueblo way of life. I interviewed three Pueblo women from three different Pueblos and in the interest of providing a safe space for their voices to be heard, decided to keep their identities and Pueblos confidential and

anonymous. My research participants thus includes a Pueblo woman who is a member of the grandmother generation and is within the age range starting at 55 years and up; a Pueblo woman who is in the parent generation, within the age range between 35 years to 54 years old; and a Pueblo woman who is in the youth generation, within the age range between 18 years and 34 years old. All participants are leaders, which is defined as working on behalf of their people to highlight the voices of their people and the issues that concern us as Pueblo and Indigenous women and community members.

In this research, I have also included my own ethnobiographical perspective to include my voice and experiences as a Pueblo woman, essentially as the fourth participant. My reflections are included as part of the methodology and narratives and are sprinkled throughout each section of the dissertation. In this work, it has been my intention to have the narratives, voices, and stories be part of an overall story of change and transformation, to reflect the reality of the world we live in.

In our Pueblo way of life, we are aware that we live within a world of change where nothing stays constant except for our core values, which ground and guide us on our journey through this world. For example, Pueblo life revolves around the change of the seasons, the changes in the patterns of the moon rising and the sun's journey across the sky, and changes that occur based on what is happening internally, within the Pueblo community. We know that there are constants such as the sun rising each day however we also know that the sun does not always follow the same path as the day before because of natural changes. We plant our seeds in the spring knowing that the weather changes each day and we send our prayers to the universe with requests to help our seeds

grow into plants, for the plants to be healthy and productive, for the rain to fall to water our plants, and then when we harvest, we thank the plants for providing for us, for nurturing us. Because of the changes in nature, we flow with those changes and if by chance, our crops do not produce or do not grow as expected, for example due to drought or a severe heat wave, we may be disappointed, but we accept what we are given, and we continue to move forward. Our values keep us strong and support us at all times.

Each day, every breath we take is an opportunity to live our values by being aware of one's surroundings, and by being a person who is aware of other people. For example, in the Pueblo village, acknowledgement of other people is a very important aspect of demonstrating the value of respect. A Kewa person cannot walk around the Kewa Pueblo community without acknowledging the people he or she may pass by. Acknowledgment is spoken in the Keres language and is an expected behavior of another Pueblo person recognizing where the other person is at in that space in time. Therefore, it follows that if a person from Kewa was planning to conduct research at Kewa, that person would need to be cognizant about this type of awareness within the Kewa Pueblo community so as not to be disrespectful and to establish trust to move forward with one's research.

I believe that "good" leaders are not those who dictate and demand that people follow them. Good leaders are those who are able to get people to join in the movement to connect with each other in the same direction or purpose or vision. From an early age, as Pueblo people, we learn how to conduct ourselves for ceremonies such that we are aware of how we are interacting with others. We know how we fit into the collective

ceremony going on and we are aware that we are melding into the community, to be connected with each other, whether we are participating in or observing the ceremony. A “good” researcher must know how she or he will fit into the collective, the community and must have an awareness of how her or his actions around research will impact the other members of the collective, the Pueblo community. And this researcher must also be able to take responsibility for helping people in the community to understand the reasons for the research and to gain their trust and support for the research. Such a researcher must also be strong enough to accept that research may be denied outright and be prepared and flexible enough to have other options to fall back on.

As such, those other options came into play in my research. I had originally planned to conduct my research at Kewa, and then I changed those plans as an unexpected challenge would have made it very difficult to move forward in that direction. I conducted my interviews outside of any of the Pueblo communities in the local towns nearby some of the Pueblo nations.

After transcribing the interviews, I coded each paragraph, looked for themes, and met with the Pueblo women I had interviewed to follow up the interviews and I also spent time observing the Pueblo women doing the work they do or interacting with family or community members.

### **Characteristics of Pueblo and Indigenous Women’s Knowledges and Teachings**

#### **Understandings of Indigenous women’s knowledges.**

There are similarities and linkages to what has been written and shared by other Indigenous women in defining what Indigenous women’s knowledge is. I review some of

these here to provide additional context regarding how I have begun to frame our knowledges and to draw initial connections to what my research reveals. For example, the Harakmbut people, like many Indigenous peoples, had a deep connection to their lands as explained in Sheila Aikman who spent time with the Harakmbut people in the southeast Peruvian Amazon from the late 1970's to around 2002. She described Harakmbut women's knowledge as follows,

Women's knowledge is oral, and it is personal. It is not public, written down in a book for anyone to read should they want to. Instead, it belongs to the individual women, who, over their lifetimes, have built up their knowledge and understanding of the environment, the crops, and the spirit world. This is their wisdom, which they used to pass on to their daughters and granddaughters as they grew up. (2002, p. 43)

The characteristics of Harakmbut women's knowledge are that it is oral (meaning, it is not written in a book), and their knowledge comes from a woman's life experiences and understanding of the world around her and her understanding of connections to the spirit world. Harakmbut women's knowledge is passed down from mothers and grandmothers to daughters and granddaughters. Aikman documented that until the late 1970's, Harakmbut women's domain was primarily in cultivating crops and knowing which plants to gather for food and medicines and the songs and prayers for those crops and plants that grew on their ancestral homelands. The economy of the Harakmbut people also appeared to have been centered around Harakmbut women's knowledge until the 1980's when there was a shift in the economy, reflecting the broader global dominant shift towards neoliberalism. Aikman's argument regarding these types of shifts towards



dominant primarily government-driven economic practices also had severe implications for how formal education has been constructed for the Harakmbut, which led to the erosion of the status and practice women's knowledge while uplifting formal schooling.

Similarly, in "Haudenosaunee women were farmers" (Roesch Wagner 2001, p. 52), Roesch Wagner described how Haudenosaunee women of the Northeastern regions of the U.S. and Canada "held the sacred responsibility of creating life – from their own bodies and from the body of Mother Earth." She shared the following creation story:

The Grandmother buried her daughter and planted in her grave the plants and leaves that she had clutched in her hands when she fell from the sky world. Not long after, over her daughter's head grew corn, beans, and squash. These were later known as the 'three sisters' and became the main life support groups for the people of the Haudenosaunee. From her heart grew the sacred tobacco which would later be used as an offering to send greetings to the Creator. At her feet grew the strawberry plants, as well as other plants that would be used as medicines to cure sickness. The earth itself was referred to as 'Our Mother' by the Master of Life, because their mother had become one with the earth. (p. 57)

Roesch Wagner described the balance between Haudenosaunee women and men such that "[w]omen were responsible for everything *in* the earth, while men had the care of everything *on* the earth (hunting, fishing, etc.)" (p. 57). The Haudenosaunee creation story provided the lessons followed by the Haudenosaunee people who live in a matriarchal society, generally meaning women hold primary decision-making responsibility in their communities. The characteristic of how Haudenosaunee women's knowledge is communicated appear to be similar to that of the Harakmbut women because their knowledge is derived from the oral tradition of storytelling, honoring these

stories, and living daily life according to the lessons given by the Grandmother.

Another characteristic of Indigenous women's knowledge is that it is usually shared among women and is demonstrated, upheld, and honored by the community. For example, Haudenosaunee women's knowledge is demonstrated through songs and dances, originally described by Joanne Shenandoah, a member of the Oneida Nation, and shared in a publication led by former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Wilma Mankiller,

Nowhere is the Haudenosaunee appreciation for women better reflected than in their music and dance. When the women dance, they form a circle around the drum; they move with the Earth, counterclockwise, their feet caressing the Earth as they shuffle to one of the hundreds of verses sung in their honor. To be part of that circle is a great source of strength for me. (2004, p. xxv)

In this sense, Haudenosaunee women's knowledge is shared in collective behavior within the community through the songs that are sung in their honor and the dances they participate in together as women. Other women learn this aspect or characteristic of Haudenosaunee women's knowledge by participating in the dance, watching, or singing.

Furthermore, Indigenous women's knowledges also involve the sharing of these knowledges in ways in addition to stories, songs, and dances to reaffirm and assert our relationship with the earth. In the words of Mary and Carrie Dann, two Western Shoshone women whom I admire for their strength and steadfast courage in standing to protect the land rights of the Western Shoshone:

Western Shoshone women are taught that a woman is like the Earth: she gives and nurtures life. The Earth provides for us, just as we provide for our children. The way we

were taught, if the Earth is treated with disrespect by a woman, she is disrespecting herself. We are one and the same. (2004, p. 103)

These two Western Shoshone women have stood by those words through their actions in standing up to the United States who illegally acquired title to the aboriginal lands of the Western Shoshone. I met the Dann sisters in the early 1980's when the Western Shoshone were holding meetings of the various Western Shoshone bands to decide whether or not to accept the settlement offered by the United States for the alleged taking of Western Shoshone lands. I can still hear Carrie saying that *their lands were not taken* because she was still grazing her cattle on those lands, still hunting on those lands, still living on those lands, and still protecting the lands from encroachment by United States agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management. The local Indigenous knowledge of these two courageous Western Shoshone sisters was lived through their actions, their words, and their deep respect for themselves as Indigenous women with the responsibility to protect the Earth. These two sisters, using their Western Shoshone knowledge, have served as role models demonstrating activism, courage, strength and how to strategize. I thoroughly relish the deep conversations that I was privy to when the Dann sisters were discussing what they planned to do next to counter actions taken by the United States against the Western Shoshone.

During my travels to Indigenous communities, I was also blessed to meet Audrey Shenandoah, a clan mother and teacher from Onondaga, one of the Haudenosaunee nations. When I met her, also in the 1980's, she was teaching the Onondaga language at the community school. I had the opportunity to stay with her daughter, Jeannie

Shenandoah, a midwife, and learned so much from that my visits with these two wonderful women about matrilineal society and the roles and responsibilities of the Indigenous women of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. In writing, Audrey shared the following,

The Clan Mothers, the grandmothers, the aunts, and the elders were the ones who had the honor and responsibility of nurturing young minds of the children. When a baby is born, the Clan Mothers give them their name. The way we describe it in our language is that the Clan Mothers have a bag of names by them and when a baby is born, they reach in the bag and choose a name for the baby. From the time of birth until children were about seven years of age, they were entrusted to the women. They weren't isolated from the rest of the settlement, but the young children spent most of their time with the women who were responsible for nurturing these little spirits. They taught the children how to take care of one another. They taught them survival skills, how to gather medicine, and how to determine what was good and bad for them. Then after the special time with the women, the children were mixed with the rest of society where their talents were recognized—one may have the gift of singing, another the gift of dancing or being a good speaker. Nurturing the mind and body were the most important things in our people's history. (2004, p. 105)

She continued,

We learn everything from our grandmothers. They didn't sit us down with a book or paper and say, "Now you write this down and remember this." We learned from hearing what was important in our lives over and over again. Even if young people say they have heard it all before, we have to keep repeating things that build their characters. I can remember my grandmother saying in our own language, "To my last breath, I will still be telling you these things." Maybe young people sometimes don't want to listen, but the only way to perpetuate knowledge is to keep telling them. The nurturing of the mind and body is the most important thing in our people's history. (2004, p. 105-106)

From this Onondaga women's example, we once again see that Indigenous women's

knowledge was not learned in a book or in writing, and further, that this knowledge sharing was and remains systematic and continuously asserted. The knowledge shared by the grandmothers, aunts, Clan Mothers and other women, was demonstrated, and shared through words of guidance, prayers, songs, dances, and through actions and behaviors.

Another important lesson I learned on my first visit to Onondaga was about identity and sovereignty. Jeannie took us to see Niagara Falls, and she decided to take us over to the Canadian side to view them away from the tourist spots on the United States side. At the Canada-United States border, the border patrol officer asked for our identification and where we were from. Jeannie, of course, said she was from the Onondaga Nation and showed him her Onondaga passport. I pulled out my New Mexico driver's license and said I was from the United States. After the officer left, Jeannie explained that the Haudenosaunee do not claim to be from the United States. They are from the Onondaga Nation, and that they assert their sovereignty and identity through the use of their Onondaga-issued passports. She reminded me that I was from Kewa Pueblo, not the United States, and that the next time I should be prepared to let them know that I was from Kewa Pueblo. I took that lesson to heart, and it carried me through law school in reinforcing my identity as a Kewa Pueblo woman. This assertion also supported the very reason I wanted to be in law school to protect tribal sovereignty and helped me to be strong in that place of learning where I was immersed in nonindigenous laws and the patriarchal beliefs underlying most of those laws.

### **Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings.**

I am Kewa-meh (my own spelling here), meaning I am from Kewa, the village

and the lands also known as the Santo Domingo Pueblo. I am of the Sun Clan, which reflects my connections to relatives on my mother's side, and I have a Keres name that was given to me by my father's relatives; both of these practices for establishing identity and relationship reflect the balance between my mother's relatives and my father's relatives and reflect the responsibilities those relatives had for my upbringing. I have learned how life was created through "thought" and how Pueblo people have been taught to live according to values given to them by the two sisters and Thought Woman. Pueblo women's knowledge is rooted in Pueblo values that were given to Pueblo people when they were being taught how to live in the fourth world according to stories about the two sisters, an elder and a younger sister.

Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings are similar to other Indigenous women's knowledge and teachings found globally in that the knowledge is derived from community and ancestral values, many of which are local, yet held in common among Indigenous peoples. The distinction of Pueblo women's knowledge and teachings is demonstrated and reflected through Pueblo women's connections to their ancestral lands and to their communities and the distinct Pueblo languages that have been carried down since time immemorial. In most of the Pueblos, we still maintain our Pueblo beliefs and uphold our values throughout the various cycles and seasons of the year through ceremonies, songs, dances, and other activities.

### **Understandings of Pueblo women's knowledges**

In thinking about how Indigenous women's knowledge and Pueblo women's knowledge are conceptualized, I consider our knowledge as *the lessons or stories that*

*have been passed down by Indigenous or Pueblo women from generation to generation, whether they be spoken or unspoken* (my emphasis). In my travels and in conversations with Indigenous women from around the world, I have learned that we all have stories about how we came to live in this world, how we came to live in our various homelands and how we were to live with respect for other forms of life in this world.

While I assert that there is some universality in the way we can begin to conceptualize Indigenous women's knowledges, these are also distinct and local: The characteristics of Pueblo and Indigenous women's knowledges and teachings vary according to who the Pueblo and Indigenous women are, where exactly they come from, and the language or languages they speak. There are similarities, and there are also differences in Indigenous women's knowledge or teachings taking into consideration the cultural values of the particular Indigenous women or Pueblo women and their connections to their homelands.

In my dissertation research, I had the wonderful opportunity and honor to conduct a narrative research study whereby I interviewed three Pueblo women. We had rich conversations about Pueblo women's knowledge. While confidentiality is difficult among smaller populations, I have chosen to keep the Pueblo women anonymous, and they are identified here by pseudonyms to protect their identities. The Pueblos they come from are also unidentified and anonymous. For the purposes of my dissertation writings, they are known as: Ann from Pueblo C, Tina from Pueblo B, and Mary from Pueblo A. Ann is a grandmother; Tina is in the parent generation; and Mary is from the youth generation.

I cannot say enough to express the heartfelt gratitude and utmost respect that I carry for these three Pueblo women whose valuable insights are shared with you as part of their way of carrying forward Pueblo women's teachings and knowledge.

It should be noted that I chose to limit my interviews to three Pueblo women because I wanted to highlight the rich and in-depth narratives that are shared by Pueblo women from three different generations in this section of my dissertation and to provide snapshots into the lives of Pueblo women who have the courage to speak and let their voices be heard. The information they provided is as much illuminating of the questions I asked that began this book chapter, as it is biographical in many respects. As you, the reader shall see, their voices are central to the discussion around Pueblo women's knowledges and as such, I have made every effort to share as much of their words as possible.

It should further be noted that their voices and my voice, as a fourth participant, as shared in this dissertation are not intended to say that we speak for all Pueblo women or for our Pueblos, because that is not possible due to the richness of experiences and knowledge of all Pueblo women throughout all of the Pueblo nations. These are *our* voices, our words, and it is our collective hope that these words will resonate with other Pueblo women or serve as a catalyst for more Pueblo women's voices to be spoken, heard, and shared to make those connections and reflect Pueblo core values and teachings that will continue carried down from generation to generation.

My research did not assume a singular definition of Pueblo women's knowledge,



and instead, I sought to work with participants to define Pueblo women's knowledge in their own/our own words. Here is an example of how Pueblo women's knowledge is framed by my participants:

[Pueblo women's knowledge is] a concept that I wrangled with all my life because I think gender roles are really blatant in a lot of our traditional communities. I think women's roles are pretty well-defined and men's roles are pretty well defined in terms of family and traditional roles in our community. I come from a traditionally matrilineal tribe, and so my mother, who had a very high role as a matriarch, is the one who demonstrated those gender roles for me. She taught me to view the community as one big family so the role of women and women's knowledge is an extension of you as a mother. That nurturing, caring, helping, coming to as an aid, rescuer, the organizer. Those are the roles that Pueblo women have. It's a huge responsibility because the men in our community rely on our women, on us as women, to prepare everything for any event that's happening in our community. And if those preparations weren't made and organized, nothing would work! So, Pueblo women have a HUGE role. If we took it away, our community would be like a beehive without a queen. It would be totally disorganized. It would be in chaos. So, *I think Pueblo women hold the community together, even though we're not acknowledged most of the time.* [Ann, Pueblo C, my emphasis]

Ann's perspective is critical in showing us that she believes women hold a central role in the community, despite not necessarily being acknowledged outwardly for this role. I can identify with this. I am also a grandmother, and from my perspective and as reiterated throughout this dissertation, Pueblo women's knowledge is the teachings and learnings passed down from Pueblo women over the generations to teach Pueblo women what our roles and responsibilities are. I think Pueblo women's knowledge is that which is planted and nurtured in a person from the time she or he is being carried in her or his mother's

womb, through birth and entry into the world as an infant to when you take your first breathe of air, feel your mother's warmth as she holds you close, and continues when you hear the voices of your mother, your aunts, your grandmothers and your female relatives. Pueblo women's knowledge makes a deep connection that continues to resonate within a person's entire being for the rest of that person's life in this world and beyond into the spiritual world.

It is interesting to think about this definition in this way and I wonder whether my answer would have been the same about twenty-three years ago, before I became a grandmother and was just starting out my career as a legal services attorney on the Navajo Nation. As I recall, in those days, I was concerned with making sure that my two sons graduated from high school, that they had enough food to eat, that they were safe and that they did not follow the footsteps of other young Native men and pick up the habits of drinking and drugging. So, it was with great interest to hear the following from this Pueblo woman in the parent generation who comes from the generation at least twenty to twenty-five years younger than those of us who are now grandmothers:

Pueblo women's knowledge is all encompassing. There's so much that impacts our life as Pueblo people and women being central to, I mean *giving birth to our families and our culture and our communities* and knowing that *everything that is directed in our Pueblo way is to the feminine*. Right? There is that piece that you have to know a lot about everything. You're a doctor to your kids. You're a teacher. You're a listener to your partners and your friends, therapist, those different roles. You're a provider. If you're a single mom, you're providing for your family. Even if you're not a single mom, you're also contributing to your community, to your family in every aspect. So, I think it's mind, body, heart, encompassing of that knowledge, of that information, of the things that you want to pass on to your

kids or future generations. If you don't have kids, still you want to be able to have that participation in these different levels and have a belief in yourself. For me, it's just all encompassing, Pueblo women's knowledge." [Tina, Pueblo B, my emphasis]

The all-encompassing nature of what Tina describes as comprising Pueblo women's knowledge ranges from, as she states, "giving birth...to our culture and our communities" to having to then take care of people on a daily basis and thus needing to know how to do pretty much everything. This is a critical way of thinking about knowledge. Then we hear the voice of Pueblo women from the generation of those who close in age to my oldest granddaughter, those in this youth generation learning how to make their way in the world perhaps on their own or perhaps while still living with their parents.

Pueblo women's knowledge is etiquette, I guess, if you were to put it in those words. You're taught *how to carry yourself as a Pueblo woman*. Those things are modeled from birth. You're shown how to carry out our duties. We have responsibilities, and I think the process of sharing that isn't a formal learning process, it's very natural. You just do it! You're just shown how by your mother, your aunts, your grandma. All of the women in your family participate in sharing that knowledge. You just grow up learning about what you're supposed to do." [Mary, Pueblo A, my emphasis]

Being taught how to carry ourselves is also an important perspective regarding knowledge in action in Pueblo communities, which Mary points out is modeled for Pueblo girls. As a researcher, what I gathered from these perspectives and insights about what Pueblo women's knowledge is and how it is defined by Pueblo women representing

three different generations, is demonstration of both the spectrum of definitions yet the commonality of the important gender roles that our mothers, grandmothers and other female relatives have imparted to us so that we might know for ourselves what Pueblo women's knowledge is.

### **How Pueblo Women's Knowledges Are Taught and Practiced**

In defining Pueblo women's knowledge, all participants mentioned how this knowledge was exhibited or shared, or both. We have been able to carry forward and share amongst ourselves, perhaps through modeling as Mary states or through explicit instruction and actively serving our families and communities as Tina and Ann state. Furthermore, our Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings have survived despite the onslaughts of three waves of oppression, namely the Spanish conquest, Mexican rule, and now colonization efforts by the United States. We have practices and beliefs that we do not share with non-Pueblo members and have been able to maintain our identities as Pueblo people. Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna Pueblo) affirmed this perspective:

As the power of woman is the center of the universe and is both heart (womb) and thought (creativity), the power of the Keres people is the corn that holds the thought of the All Power (deity) and connects the people to that power through the heart of Earth Woman, Iyatiku. She is the breath of life to the Keres because for them corn holds the essence of earth and conveys the power of earth to the people. Corn connects us to the heart of power, and that heart is Iyatiku, who under the guidance of Thought Woman directs the people in their affairs. (1986, p. 22)

There is a recurrence of women deities in Pueblo stories who teach the Pueblo people how to live and to honor the wisdom, knowledge, and teachings of Pueblo women.

Pueblo women's knowledges and teachings are closely tied to the lands, the animals, the plants growing on those lands (e.g. corn, squash, beans, melons, chile, sweet peas), to the migration stories, and those teaching women specifically about their responsibilities to the overall well-being of the Pueblo community.

Arlene Stairs stated that “[t]he learning often occurs without conscious intention or awareness” (Stairs 1994, p. 66) and goes on to talk about how learning appears to take place through observation of one's relatives and that the motivation for learning is tied to a sense of belonging, meaning that when a person belongs, they are strengthening their relations to each other. That type of learning or education happens in Pueblo communities. For example, at Kewa, women bake bread, pies, and cookies throughout the year for the many cultural events, to sustain one's family and relatives and as a source of income. Young girls learn by watching older girls and women how to mix the dough, what type of container to mix the dough in, what ingredients go into the mix, how much water needs to be added to produce dough that will rise well overnight for baking in the morning in the Pueblo outdoor ovens. The educational process does not end there. The dough is usually mixed the previous night and is kneaded once during the night and then re-covered to continue rising. In the early morning hours, the whole household of women, including the young girls, are awakened to help with getting the oven ready and with kneading the dough into shapes that will be baked. There is no baking school, no formal baking lesson provided and no television or video showing how to make Pueblo bread. Girls learn by watching, then participating and then eventually as they grow older, they are given more responsibility for either some of the aspects for baking bread or the entire

process. Throughout the mixing, rising, and baking, the older women and the Keres language may share stories is spoken throughout. The little girls are usually given small pieces of dough to work with that will be added to the loaves made by their sisters, cousins, aunties, mothers, grandmothers, or other relatives. There is a real sense of belonging and togetherness throughout the process, which strengthens the relationships between all involved.

When asked how Pueblo women's knowledge is taught and practiced, Mary also shared that Pueblo women's knowledge is taught by her mother, aunts, and other women in her family.

*[W]e have duties.* There are calendars that we follow, social calendars, traditional calendars. Then there's the Catholic calendar as well. We know when we're supposed to be 'on.' We know when these days are and what's expected of us. I think each family has their own way that they prepare and participate. But we cook! That's how we practice our knowledge. We feed people and it's not just any food. Sometimes there's certain things you have to make. There's a certain way to make them. There are reasons for that, and you're taught that, whenever you're taught that, in the right time. We cook but we also participate in other ways as well. Overall, I think we keep things going by... we start the preparations before a lot of the events happen. (my emphasis)

Tina shared that Pueblo women's knowledge is taught as follows:

There's so many different ways it's taught. *I feel like we're multi-intellectual beings.* A lot of stuff is taught from just observing and seeing. You're following your aunts and uncles around. You're sitting at tables where conversations are happening. Some of it is like passive knowledge absorption and some of it is really active, like in our dances. But even at that, it's also kind of passive because

we go and when we're participating, we're just mimicking what the adults are doing. Others are the verbal life-lessons that people share with you around what it was like for them to grow up as a woman, as a girl in the community. Listening to different perspectives from different people about their experiences, so men and women and children. Gleaning information from that. Because we're such an oral tradition, nothing is really written down, so it is observing, doing. Then that filtering. "OK, so they're doing this. I don't really want to be doing that, so I'm going to do this instead." Especially growing up in the alcoholic home, or where there's violence and abuse, it's like really observing and hearing how people are behaving, and then making a conscious choice, "I'm not going to do that, I'm going to do this." Sometimes, even if you make a conscious choice, it's still some of those things that you heard, witnessed and saw, then you're doing even though you don't want to be doing. There was no other way that was actually shown. It comes in multiple realms. I think there's also the spiritual piece of things just come or you are just born with it. Things come with you through prayer, things come with you through other practices. I think it's multiple pathways that those lessons come. (my emphasis)

Ann also shared that there are multiple ways of learning for Pueblo females while highlighting learning by example and the relationship between learner and teacher (girls and women):

I think Pueblo women's knowledge is mostly taught by example. We just do as our mothers, our grandmothers, our aunties. *Growing up, they took us with them.* We were around them. They did what they had to do, and we learned from watching them. And then they would turn it over to us and say, "Now you do it." As girls, as we grew up. That's how we learned that role. That's how I learned it. (my emphasis)

When Ann was asked how Pueblo women's knowledge is practiced, she added the following,

Well, obviously it's practiced *first of all in the home*. I think it starts from mothers teaching their daughters. It's taught from grandmothers teaching their granddaughters. From aunties. I think we all learned that, and we know this as Pueblo women. We gather together, we're like little hens. We all gather together, and we share information, we share problems, we share issues. We seek advice from each other without actually saying, "Help me." Because when we share, I think we're open with each other. We can relate because we all come from the same community. We know what our norms are. We know what our accepted behaviors are in terms of the role of women. We understand that, and I think women share that with each other. We learn it from each other, and I think we pass it on to our granddaughters. I think we pass that on just by example. I have one granddaughter and I have nieces. Oftentimes we get together, and they don't always have to ask, we just do things. I think our role as Pueblo women is just... I don't want to say by osmosis, but it just passes on by example...

From my perspective, I also see and know that Pueblo women's knowledge is taught by our mothers, aunties, grandmothers and other female relatives who have the responsibilities and duties to pass on their knowledge as a means of ensuring that we, their daughters, nieces, granddaughters and female relatives will know what is expected of us, that we will know what to do when fulfilling our roles as Pueblo women and that we will someday also pass on our knowledge.

I compiled the ways that Pueblo women's knowledges are practiced as shared from the perspectives of the three Pueblo women participants who I interviewed. Those ways that Pueblo women's knowledges are practiced are listed in the following table. It is interesting to note the many similarities in responses among the three generations of Pueblo women from three different Pueblos. From my perspective, this compilation tells



me that it is so important that we continue to carry forward these practices so that our Pueblo women's knowledges continue to be passed down from generation to generation.

Table 1. How is Pueblo women's knowledge practiced?

<b>Mary (youth gen)</b>	<b>Tina (parent gen)</b>	<b>Ann (grandmother gen)</b>
duties	raising kids	we do as our mothers, our grandmothers, our aunts
following calendars	teaching	they took us with them
preparing for events	speaking the language	we were around them
participating in events	helping	sharing
cooking	nurturing	preparing
showing up for relatives	modeling behavior	speaking the language
helping	providing	by example
paying attention	believing in self	nurturing
remembering what you can	mimicking	helping
sharing	Following aunts around	caring
speaking the language	talking when kids around	organizing
being there	participating	rescuing
	contributing	mentoring

The table showing how Pueblo knowledges is practiced shows some similarity from generation to generation, for example, all three generations listed “speaking the language” and “helping”. It is interesting to see that the grandmother generation participant's responses included “mentoring”, “rescuing”, and “nurturing” which are often responsibilities or activities associated with being a grandmother. Then the parent generation participant listed “raising kids” and “teaching” which are often responsibilities or activities associated with being a parent. And then the youth generation participant listed “being there”, “paying attention” and “remembering what you can” which are often responsibilities or activities associated with being a young person or a person who

learning from her mother or grandmother. The chart also shows the variances and similarities in learning and teaching modes between the three generations, reflecting the intergenerational pedagogy that occurs in the passage and practice of Pueblo women's knowledges.

The passing on of knowledge and practicing of it has become very important to me as I am a grandmother now and my elderly mom is in her nineties. When I was growing up, we lived in Albuquerque, away from the Pueblo, yet my mom made sure that we came back to the Pueblo when there were dances, when there were (cultural) "things going on" so that we could watch and learn. We grew up surrounded by Pueblo women, our aunties, our grandmother and her sisters, our cousins, and other female relatives. My sisters and I watched our mom and aunties participate in dances and we learned so that we could also participate in some of the dances and so that we knew what to do and the proper words to say in the Keres language. We learned how to dress ourselves in our traditional clothes, how to fix our hair after closely watching our aunties who showed us how to dress and how to fix our hair. Then I went away to college and worked far away from home (Santo Domingo Pueblo) so that I did not go home as often. About four years ago, my mom moved back to Santo Domingo Pueblo after living in Albuquerque for over fifty years or so. Of course, the way that things were done when she was growing up in the Pueblo and the way that things are done now have changed. Sometimes I have found that what I learned to do as a Pueblo woman no longer fits into current expectations. For example, I was taught that as a Pueblo girl/woman, that I should always wear a shawl whenever I left the house to walk somewhere in the Pueblo village, and especially when going to the

plaza or to the kiva. In the present, the wearing of shawls when walking around the Pueblo village appears to be optional. I have observed that girls and some women are now wearing light jackets or sweaters instead of shawls or no type of covering at all when they walk around the Pueblo village. Because of what I learned those many years ago from my grandmother, my aunties, and my mom, I do not feel comfortable walking around without a shawl in the village. I am back in learning mode because some of the things that I was taught those many years ago have now changed. I am learning again by observing and sometimes by asking questions when necessary and when I want to ensure that I am doing things the right way, the respectful way.

### **Pueblo Women's Knowledges and Language**

From my perspective, there is a direct link between Pueblo women's knowledge and the Pueblo languages we speak. There are concepts that are expressed in our languages that cannot be translated into the English language and there is no need to do so. My maternal grandfather only spoke to me, my sisters and my brother in Keres and he constantly admonished my mom, my dad, my aunties, my uncles, and my cousins to speak to us in Keres. I am so grateful for his stern guidance because I learned to understand the language most of the time but not all of the time because most of my relatives, including my mom and dad, continued to speak to us in English. When I became a mother, I tried to teach my sons the language, brought them to the Pueblo for dances and family gatherings, and was happy to learn that they both picked up some of the language and were able to understand enough to understand the significance of our language as connected to Pueblo knowledge and teachings. Now that I am a

grandmother, I have additional responsibilities to my grandchildren and I am confronted with challenges because my grandchildren have not had the benefit of growing up in my house all the time and have not had the benefit of being around our relatives at Santo Domingo Pueblo to learn the Keres language. Thus, I resonated with the insights and voices of my participants when asked whether there is a relationship between Pueblo women's knowledges and Pueblo languages:

As someone that doesn't speak the language, I think there is. There's ways that I feel I'm missing stuff because I don't speak the language. When you have that, your interpretation then comes from your interpreters. I think that's a challenge in itself because for those that are monolingual and have a translator from English to Spanish or sign language to verbal, that you lose something. I think if we don't have full trust in our translators, then that's a real difficulty, right? If my dad's interpreting something, I don't know that I'm getting everything as opposed to when my mom's interpreting something. My dad is going to interpret from his male perspective and he's also going to be like, *"Is this something women should know, or should women not know?"* I think there's a lot of that in our community. "This is not something women should know." My sister and I struggle with my dad around that piece because it's like, "If we don't know, then people are giving us this information and we're not getting this side from you or these other things. How are we going to interpret what that means for us?" So, I think the same with those of us that don't have a full grasp of our language is that we're losing stuff in translation. Everybody we talk to says there's so much in our language: there's so much breadth and so much information and so much detail that is so much more than English language. But also, because our learning is a lot of observation and interpretation, then I feel like there's a lot that I'm also absorbing that may not just come through the language. It's like tone, it's like body language, all of these things. Also, from what I can understand, there's a lot of gendered myth in our language. I know that that there's also different languages that are used in different contexts. So, there's very ceremonial

language, very old language that comes out in only certain times of the year or certain practices, and there are only a few people that hold that ancient knowledge. My dad was a beautiful orator in [the language]. He can go to the old, old... You can hear people talk now and hear it, and you can hear when he's talking in that way, it's very different. I think there's also different roles in our community and different language. But there's also been so much that has been lost, too. It's really hard. But yes, I feel like there is a role and a relationship. It's also a softer language. I don't hear a lot of negativity. It comes from different people. Like tone and stuff. But our language is a nurturing language. It's not a punishing or shameful language, the way English can be." [Tina, Pueblo B, my emphasis]

Interpretations of language and who interprets the Pueblo language to the English language are a vital part of how a person shares one's knowledge. This features prominently in Tina's explanation of the link between language and knowledge for Pueblo women while also highlighting the differences regarding knowledge that is separable in our communities due to gender differences. Without going too far into this knowledge and how and why, suffice it to say that there are women's and men's roles in the Pueblos, and there is knowledge differentiation according to community norms and unwritten policies. In my undergraduate studies years ago at the University of New Mexico, I took a Keresan oral history and language course where my classmates were from a few of the Pueblos who spoke dialects of Keres that differed yet were similar to that spoken at Santo Domingo Pueblo. I had already learned while growing up that there was a woman's language and a man's language, meaning there were words used by women and words used by men in certain circumstances and that there were also words that were used to speak to women and men along with differences in tone and emphasis.

Reflecting on what Tina shared made me think about the challenges I had in teaching my sons some of the language and sharing my Pueblo women's knowledge with them. I remember explaining to them, because they asked, that there were words that they had to use that were different than what I would say.

Ann further underscored the importance of language in expressing our knowledge:

I think language is such a key and vital component of our life as Pueblo women and as Pueblo people. That's why it's kind of frightening right now. It's frightening that there's this potential loss of language. I'm really happy to say that I was lucky to have been around elders, and I'm of that era that we still hold our language. We still can speak. There are concepts, there are ideas that can be expressed in your own language that cannot be expressed in English. There are things that only we understand that are spoken in our native tongue. So, when we talk about our role as women and our passing on of knowledge in our Pueblo community about anything—about our role as women, of our traditional life, our religion—*language is absolutely key to that understanding*. I think our languages, they reach the heart and they reach the spirit in a way that English doesn't. (my emphasis)

Mary also shared,

Our languages are very characteristic of who we are. When you speak and communicate in your language, like *our languages have personalities*, almost. When you're in the space of working, you're working together as a family or a community for traditional reasons. When that language is spoken in that space, it feels—when that language isn't spoken in that space, I should say—you can feel the absence of the personality of that language. I don't know. It's very important. It's hard to describe because it's so ingrained. Some things that we do don't have words in English. It's impossible for us to talk about them not in our language. So, it's very important, it's inseparable. Like I said, when English is spoken in those spaces and at those

times, you can feel a lack or a certain emptiness to what's being talked about. It's really hard. A lot of what's talked about is our spiritual things, so how do you say that in words that aren't meant to describe that? You lose meaning. So, it's important for our younger generations to understand the language, not just so they can understand the language, but so they can understand the culture and the knowledge in that context of the language, not in English terms. Because when you change the language, you lose some of the meaning and feeling. So, it's just inseparable. It's so important. (my emphasis)

I personally feel the challenge in not totally understanding Keres and not being fluent.

There have been times when I have had to ask someone to explain something to me, or times when others have taken the time to explain for which I am grateful. I have also seen what Mary describes, where the English language does not and cannot reflect the relationships and connections between all living beings. As an attorney who had to be immersed in the English language, to read cases, laws and articles that came from jurists who lived in a foreign world with different beliefs and attitudes, it was a challenge in class to be able to understand certain concepts. For example, I had difficulty in understanding some of the concepts in property law, inheritance, and degrees of relationship. From my Pueblo woman's positionality, those foreign concepts did not make sense to me because I come from my Pueblo woman's knowledge of knowing who I am related to and how I am related to others and that there is no real concept of "ownership" of land and property as expressed in the English language.

In line with the sharings of my Pueblo sisters, I also believe that the passage of Pueblo women's knowledge to others is vitally linked to our languages. The importance of teaching how we are all connected, the teachings of gender roles and respect for the

roles and responsibilities that go with those roles, and Pueblo core values are expressed on a daily basis. For example, in a Pueblo village, acknowledgement of other people is a very important aspect of demonstrating the value of respect. A person cannot walk around the Pueblo community without acknowledging the people he or she may pass by. Acknowledgment is spoken in in the Keres language and is an expected behavior of a Pueblo person because it is a natural behavior.

### **Ensuring the Survival of Pueblo and Indigenous Women's Knowledges**

It is this part of the dissertation that energizes me and provides hope that Pueblo women's knowledges will survive despite the many challenges, changes and transformations that are happening around us.

I asked the Pueblo women: What do you believe are the best ways for ensuring the survival of Pueblo women's knowledge? I also asked them to share what they are doing to ensure the survival of Pueblo women's knowledge. Their answers were very poignant, straight-forward and are shared here and with my interpretation and own story provided after all three:

[Mary, Pueblo A]

I've thought about this. I think that how we've always done things worked in the past. In the past until probably the 80s Pueblo women's knowledge was absorbed by modeling. Our parents, aunties, grandmas were our teachers. They did what they needed to fulfill their duties. We observed and participated at whatever stage they thought we were ready for. Because of the rises in technology and the internet, cellphones, and various medias, our generation has become distracted. We are still exposed to those spaces where traditional knowledge is being practices but we are consumed by media and technology to the point that we are no longer naturally



learning like we did in the past. Perhaps it would help if we could start creating spaces where that knowledge is more intentionally taught, like sewing circles or women's gatherings. [R]ecently, this past holiday season, Christmas, my mom has done a lot more with only speaking—because she's fluent. I'm semi-fluent. We made, as our family and our household, we've made a conscious choice to speak, especially around the kids. So, we decided to speak the language at home. My cousin is one of the [Pueblo leaders] this year, so I've already made a commitment to myself to go home every time, whenever something is going on. That's my obligation and my responsibility this year, to help my family. That's one thing I'm going to do to ensure the survival of their knowledge. In my long-term goals, this is a discussion I was also having with my mom. I think that she wants to move home, and I think that together, my sister and my brother also, independently, are thinking of moving back home to [the Pueblo]. And so am I. We're all thinking of returning back home. My mom was the first generation to move off the reservation, and we're the first generation to grow up off the reservation. All of us in our lives have come to that place and decision that we want to move back. I think being there is very important. That's a longer-term goal that I have. I want to move back home. It's just important to be there.

[Tina, Pueblo B]

Don't kill us. Don't murder us. (laughing) Don't abuse us! Oh my god! From the basics of that, don't harass us. Again, going back to valuing every person, every voice, every experience, to help inform any decisions that we're making. Because when you make a decision, you want to know what are the unintended consequences to those that for me are the most vulnerable – our children and our women. How do we ensure that? Again, going back to our core values of honoring the feminine and the masculine. It's not just honoring the masculine, and it's not just honoring the feminine. It's honoring the fluidity of the energy of both. Ensure that our girls are getting into education. Ensure that our girls have access to reproductive justice issues, that they can choose to become mothers or not become mothers. That they are protected against disease. That they're treated with respect. All of that plays into it. If we're treating

everyone like that, not just women and not just men, our children too, then we're creating a world that is good for everyone, our elders, and our young people. We need to ensure that in our political systems in our Pueblo. We need to ensure that in our educational systems in our Pueblo. We need to ensure that in general, outside, how our women are viewed, that we're not discarded, that we're not viewed as below everybody else. I'm living, breathing, and passing on what I'm learning to other people whether they're my kids or not, whether they're other people's kids. Starting this organization is a testament to that. There was a space that was needed, that women weren't feeling they had that opportunity and that space to do it in their communities, even in their families. There's still that existing today on different levels in different places. But that we're intentionally doing this, we're creating spaces for women to have voice. We're creating opportunities for them to insert their voice in different levels of politics – local, city, tribal, state, national. We're creating those venues for our stories to be heard, for our testimonies to be given, for our knowledge to be inserted. We're doing that with the intention of creating wellness in our communities and trying to reclaim that balance of the male and the female, the fluidity of power. Really bringing forward the language to the interpretation of our [Pueblo] values into our practices, the work that we do in community. For me, I feel like I'm sharing that with my nieces and my nephews, with my cousins and my relatives. And with my community, I think while we were talking about finding the courage to say it no matter what. Being able to say it and at the same time know that our communities are where they're at because of the experiences that they've had with genocide, with colonization, with patriarchy. We need to heal from it, and we need to reclaim different aspects of ourselves in that process that I feel that is more holistic, that is more representative of the wellness that we want to see in our ecosystems and in our families.

[Ann, Pueblo C]

I think it's important for us as women to continue to teach our children. Not just our granddaughters or our grandchildren for sure. We've not taken on the role of our

grandmothers. We looked to our grandmothers and our grandparents to help us understand who we are as a people. Now it's our turn to teach our children that. I think it's really important to teach our granddaughters the significance of their role as Native women and what contribution they have to the survival of our people. It's critical for our survival. I think women, especially Native women, we look to the future. We're always looking to the future, and that future is our grandchildren. They're our hope. We know, we have been taught that we've been here for so many thousands and thousands of years and we've held onto our beliefs and our way of life as much as we've been able to. I think our grandmothers, our grandparents, our elders, our ancestors, they're the ones that taught us how important it is for us to continue that. Now that we find ourselves in that role, it's now really our duty and our responsibility to pass that on to our children and grandchildren. Certainly, to teach our granddaughters how to understand how important that they are. I think our grandmothers taught us that our communities can't survive without the women. Now that I think about it, I remember my Grandma saying that to me. "Don't forget, girls..." her telling me and my cousins, "No people survives without their women because women are the bearers of children. One of the things I do personally is that I try to take the time to spend with young women. In any situation, even if I meet a young woman down in the hallway or on the road or in Wal-Mart, or anywhere, I try to bring up, to talk about community. I don't know. It's just something that's always inside of me. I just remind them that it's important that if they have issues or concerns, it's important for them to express it. And that they're important to be part of the solution. I think if women forget that we're part of the solution, then we're not going to take an active role in creating that solution. Instead of waiting for some man to solve a problem for us or to come to our aid or rescue. That we're quite capable of doing it on our own.

The voices of Mary, Tina, and Ann are incredibly powerful and inspiring to me for what they reveal regarding what we know as Pueblo women and what we hope for, as well as what we ourselves are working towards with our people and others. As a Pueblo

woman, my involvement in the work to end violence against women provided an outlet for me to become an activist, to be able to take action and have my voice heard. I connected with other Indigenous women and Indigenous men to raise awareness about violence against Native women and learned to stand tall and to be aware of how my behavior and the behaviors of others impacted each other and all life around us. Through those connections with other Indigenous peoples, we protested the learned behaviors of individuals who chose to be abusive by organizing, by talking about the abusive behaviors and by talking about respectful behaviors that are grounded in values such as respect, love, and compassion. We danced, sang, and cried together. We practiced mindfulness by becoming more aware of the language and words we use when we communicate, how our nonverbal behaviors may impact other people, and learned to be more open and respectful to each other. I learned that by strengthening my connections with other Indigenous women and men and I was able to bring myself back to a more healthy condition. We took care of ourselves and each other. We, Indigenous women, went to the hot springs to soak, we got massages, and we hugged each other after crying, laughing, working, and dancing. We supported each other. I learned how to let go of the pain that I had been carrying around in my body because of my experiences of being abused and raped.

When I became a full-time tribal court judge about 10 years ago, I started carrying the weight of issues that came before me in Court and the weight of overseeing the judicial branch for that Pueblo. My body started reacting again as my shoulders tightened, my posture became bad, my back started hurting, I gained weight again and I

started having strange pains in my body that I had never had before. I realize now that my sense of being mindful was diminished because I did not have the connections to other people that I had while I was doing the work to end violence against Native women. Now, after reading *Embodied Protests: Emotions and Women's Health in Bolivia*, I have been reminded about the value of taking care of oneself and the value of having a support system in place.

In one of the courses during my doctoral studies taught by Dr. Mary Margaret Fonow and Professor Goldsand, I was so excited to learn about the plasticity of the brain. I have always believed in possibilities and I am a true believer in change. So, when I read about how our brain adapts and there are corresponding parts of our bodies that reflect those adaptations, I gained renewed hope for positive possibilities to happen. I enjoyed reading *Awareness Through Movement* (Feldenkrais, 1972) because there were so many sections that resonated with me and the experiences I have had over my life. The chapter that discussed how natural behavior changes to unnatural behavior or professional behavior that is controlled was right on point with perspectives about violence against women. I have seen that when people are grounded in their Pueblo values, their behavior reflects those values. I have seen that when people lose that foundation of Pueblo values or become disconnected, their behavior changes and they do not act naturally, or in tune with nature, and they then behave unnaturally by using tactics of power and control over another person.

### **Pueblo Women, Leadership & Survival of Pueblo people**

This section has been focused on ensuring the survival of Pueblo women's knowledge

and our very beings, despite the legacies of colonization and the current oppression of Pueblo and Indigenous women. I believe it is critical for us to reconsider leadership in this conversation as my participants, my Pueblo sisters as I have referred to them, are also leaders working towards these shared goals. In my research, I was interested to know how they defined leadership and how this relates to our survival as a people. I asked each of the women the following questions: a) how did they define leadership, b) if they believed women could be leaders, and c) if they considered themselves leaders. Here are their responses in order with Mary first, Tina, then Ann.

What does leadership mean?

Leadership means... I don't know... OK, what is a leader? A leader is someone who speaks up, who listens first before they speak. I think that's very important because you can't be a leader if you're saying only what you think. You have to listen to the people that you want to represent. A leader is a representative of the people, I'd say. It's a person who speaks up and is one voice of many.

Do you think women can be leaders?

All women are leaders because you're the first. My mother is so inspiring. I look at her relationships with all of her nieces and nephews, my cousins, and what she's done for them in their lives as well. She's a leader. My aunt, my great aunt who went to college, the first one in our family. They're all leaders because they show us, they set an example, and show us how to do things and how to carry ourselves, not just at home. I have so many accomplished women that I know in my life. They just show you what they can do, what's possible and in so many different ways. As you grow up, you learn from that. And you wouldn't be able to do anything if they hadn't done that, so of course they're all leaders.

Do you consider yourself a leader?

Not really. (laughing) OK, and by my definition all women are leaders. So yes, I'm definitely a leader. I think that I just want other people to speak up and find their voice and become empowered and become leaders. I hope that for many more young women, young people in general. [Mary, Pueblo A]

What does leadership mean?

For me, a leader is one who is able to give up power, to share it. I feel like in the organization people need to see one person. But it's not one person, it's everyone's contribution to the goals of...in communication with each other about where we want to be, in communication about how we're going to get there and what we're going to do. For me, a leader isn't someone that's always leading it, like out there in the front. For me, a leader is supporting the ability for others to gain skills, to gain experience, to gain knowledge, to be able to move in that. For me, I really believe in the fluidity of power. Even in our personal, intimate relationships that we need to have that fluidity of power. That sometimes a person's experience may be something that is needed as to another person's experience, so we're going to go with that. If I don't know how to build a fire, I want to depend on the person that knows how to build a fire. So, they're a leader in being able to build that fire and think about what we need. Even though we are able to hold multiple knowledges and experiences, there are some that hold a little bit more in a certain area. And that should let them... I think we're all healers and we can all be healers, but I know there is special training that others receive to be able to hold different things in different ways. By all means I want to go to that person and be like, "I may be educated in this arena or that arena, but I still need to go to someone. For me, that's what leadership is. For us, it's always about nurturing people to take on the next steps. We can get a certain way, but we want people to then be able to carry it further and pass it on. How do we do that? How are we nurturing that? For me, that's what a leader is looking like, you're looking to the past, to the lessons of the past. You're looking right now to see where we're at right now,

and then what do we need to do in order to get to this other point? It may not be you getting it to the other point. It's trying to see all these things and then seeing who might it be that's able to get us to that place? And what systems? It may be the system that exists now or it may be a totally different system. I think creativity is a part of that whole co-process. I also feel like we have to let go of ego. We cannot always be driven by ego. "I have to be the one that knows it all. I have to be the one that is the expert. I have to be the one that is in the spotlight." Ego needs to go, and that's a huge struggle at times.

Do you think women can be leaders?

Oh, hell, yeah! I feel like you're saying: Are there themes? Is there a theme that allows women to be leaders? Is it like we've experienced common traumas and needed to because of those circumstances become a leader or that helped inform that. Or are there certain themes of resiliency that kind of help in that aspect? I feel like there's a lot of people that experience traumas and there are some that go in the realm of not being able to overcome those traumas. Then there are those that do and then change and transform, right? So, what are those specific pieces that help that? I think that's always a question I have, my interest. Because there are men who abuse, and men who don't. Then there's also this place of being able to overcome that. So, is that the nurturing piece in that?

Do you consider yourself a leader?

I struggled with that when I was younger, but now I feel like yeah, I am a leader. I played sports, so it really helped to be like. You have to have a point guard, but it wasn't just a point guard that made the team. There is a confidence, too, at a certain point, to be able to say, "In times of crisis this is what's needed." Or to be calm in a time of crisis. Because if everybody is freaking out, there has to be someone or multiple people that are calm. I think those are the leaders in that piece. I feel I am a leader, and I hope I'm the kind of leader that is able to step aside and support other people. That's the kind of leader that I feel like I am



or I want to be. Helping other people grow. Providing the mentorship that other people provided to me. Providing the guidance or the space to help them make the decision that is best for them, and not necessarily again my ego saying, “This is the decision you need to make.” But creating the opportunities for them to really listen to their experience, listen to what’s happening and they’re observing, and making a decision that is best serving them or that moment. Yeah. I feel I am a leader. [Tina, Pueblo B]

What does leadership mean?

I think leadership means being an example. Leadership is having a love for your community and your people. Leadership is participating in the growth of that community.

Do you think women can be leaders?

Absolutely! Women have always been leaders. It was only since the time of Europeans coming here and the beginning of colonization that women’s roles were diminished. We cannot allow ourselves to continue believing that we are not leaders.

Do you consider yourself a leader?

(laughing) Sometimes I wonder! Sometimes with some of us who are in positions of what others might term leaders, like for myself, I don’t really purposefully or intentionally think of myself as a leader. I just try to think of myself—and I do think of myself—as a Pueblo woman who loves my community and my people. It is my belief that every individual within a Pueblo community is considered a “leader” and as such, is expected to behave in ways that demonstrate Pueblo core values. This means that each person is expected to be responsible and mindful of his or her behavior because one’s behavior reflects on the person’s family, relatives, and the rest of the community. These expectations and resulting obligations or responsibilities are instilled at an early age and are reinforced with additional responsibilities in accordance

with core values for the remainder of one's life. Pueblo life is full of natural activities such that those activities are maintained throughout one's lifetime, from birth until death. [Ann, Pueblo C]

To contextualize further what the women said regarding leadership, it is important to describe how we are raised to consider leaders in our communities. Leadership from a Pueblo perspective is *inherently transformational* because it changes on a daily basis throughout one's life. We live within a world of change where nothing stays constant. For example, Pueblo life revolves around the change of the seasons, the changes in the patterns of the moon rising and the sun's journey across the sky, and changes that occur based on what is happening internally, within the Pueblo community. We know that there are constants such as the sun rising each day however we also know that the sun does not always follow the same path as the day before because of natural changes. We plant our seeds in the spring knowing that the weather changes each day and we send our prayers to the universe with requests to help our seeds grow into plants, for the plants to be healthy and productive, for the rain to fall to water our plants, and then when we harvest, we thank the plants for providing for us, for nurturing us. Because of the changes in nature, we flow with those changes and if by chance, our crops do not produce or do not grow as expected, for example due to drought or a severe heat wave, we may be disappointed, but we accept what we are given, and we continue to move forward.

According to my understanding, each day, every breath we take is an opportunity to be a transformational leader, a person who is aware of their surroundings, and a person who is aware of other people. For example, in the Pueblo village, acknowledgement of

other people is a very important aspect of demonstrating the value of respect. A person cannot walk around the Pueblo community without acknowledging the people he or she may pass by. Acknowledgment is spoken in in the Keres language and is an expected behavior of a Pueblo person because it is a natural behavior.

The way we carry ourselves reflects our leadership and our awareness of life around us. We use our body to be aware of where we are by walking tall and by looking around. When we encounter another person, we communicate with the other person acknowledging where we are and where the other person is in relation to where we are. As stated, this is done to demonstrate the Pueblo value of respect to the other person. I believe that transformational leadership includes being aware of how our body movements impact the energies around us, the energies of other people, the energies of the air we breathe, the energies of the food we eat, the energies of the plants around us and our own energies. By being positive, we can produce positive energy and if we are negative, then negative energy is produced.

Transformational leadership includes being positive and knowing where we are headed and being able to act according to knowing where we are headed because it helps others to trust and be able to join together to make something happen, to be able to move through the changes happening around us. Transformational leaders are good leaders. Good leaders are not those who dictate and demand that people follow them. Good leaders are those who are able to get people to join in the movement to connect with each other in the same direction or purpose or vision. From an early age, as Pueblo people, we learn how to conduct ourselves for ceremonies such that we are aware of how we are

interacting with others. We know how we fit into the collective ceremony going on and we are aware that we are melding into the community, to be connected with each other, whether we are participating in or observing the ceremony.

It can be challenging for Pueblo women to be in leadership positions because those positions are usually held by men in most Pueblos. I have been in various types of leadership positions and am currently in a leadership position that creates the possibilities for changes to happen for other Pueblo women. This can be viewed as either a burden or a blessing. I choose to see this as a blessing because of the possibilities for positive change to happen, for positive transformations.

### **Discussion: Rejuvenating & Sustaining**

As stated earlier in this chapter, I am truly grateful for the Indigenous and Pueblo women who I have met, those I have not met yet whose work I have had the opportunity to read—their stories, poems, visual creations.

I grew up believing that I was not worth much, that I was ugly, and I was afraid of being hurt. As my circle of women friends widened, and as I had the opportunity to expand my reading, I have been nourished and rejuvenated by Indigenous women's knowledge and teachings.

I do not recall when I added Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop* and Wilma Mankiller's *Everyday is a good day* to my personal library, which have been stored away in boxes in my garage for the past two years. I have always been an avid reader, so it has been with great pleasure that I have revisited these works to gather information for my writing. I share this because I value books, and in putting together my reading list, those

two titles came to me, and I knew I had the books somewhere in a box in my garage.

Since I did not live at the Pueblo full time, also I found other ways to learn about

Indigenous women's and Pueblo women's knowledge.

In acknowledgement of Pueblo women's knowledge, I am pleased to share the following reflections by Paula Gunn Allen:

My tribe, the Keres Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, put women at the center of their society long ago. Of course, they don't say *they* did it, they say *She* did it. That She is Thought, Memory, Instinct, Tradition, and Medicine or Sacred Power; that She is ritual, ceremony, food, and shelter; that She is the ways by which these are developed—the bringer of them and the teacher of them and the creator of them. Where I come from, the people believe traditionally that nothing can happen that She does not think into being, and because they believe this they say that the Woman is the Supreme Being, the Great Spirit, the Great Mystery, the All-Being. This WomanGod, Thought/Thinking Woman they call Spider Grandmother, acknowledging her potency a creator, as Dream/Vision being, as She Who Weaves existence on all material and supermaterial plans into being. (1986, p. 263-264)

Allen talked about Keres Pueblo Indians. From Laguna Pueblo, one of the Pueblo nations that speak the Keres language, it is possible that her Pueblo women's knowledge comes from Laguna, but it is possible that this knowledge is a composite from other Keres-speaking Pueblo nations. Her work shares a teaching that gives hope to Pueblo women and girls whose voices have been silenced and is a tool for discussion among Pueblo women from other non-Keresan speaking Pueblo nations. Her words provide the positive energy for rejuvenation, sustenance and provide support for the belief that we are sustained because we have this type of knowledge. Her work has certainly done that for me.

In one of our classes for our doctoral program, we read *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko, also a member of Laguna Pueblo and had some interesting discussions about the stories and teachings within the overall story in the book. I appreciate Gunn Allen's description of the way that Silko's knowledge and teachings were demonstrated. She wrote,

Silko also inserts a clan story from Laguna set in short poetic lines into the conventionally set prose of the novel, adding a definite traditional flavor and providing a text by which to determine the significance of ritual tradition in the novel...By using a nonsequential structure that is accretive, achronological, and interspersed with the traditional clan ritual narrative about how the rain is made to return to the village, Silko shows that clear understanding of a given narrative depends on proper understanding of the stories attached to each significant word. In this way, stories are themselves ritual events (though their ritual power comes from their relation to the actual rituals they refer to. (1986, p. 95-96)

A few of my Pueblo classmates were not happy with *Ceremony* and some of the stories shared in the novel. I have read and re-read this novel several times at different points in time in my life and continue to be intrigued by Silko's way of storytelling intermixed with poetry and ritual events. Perhaps the novel's theme of lead character Tayo's journey to reconcile his identity and find personal healing resonated with me because of similar events in my own life journey. Perhaps this type of teaching, which makes some people uncomfortable should be viewed as another unique way of expressing Pueblo women's knowledge and like some Pueblo women's teachings, the lessons are not always obvious and bear repeating and repeating until the message is heard or the message generates transformation through the conversations.

In my doctoral program, I was also invigorated and excited to read about the concept of *deep sovereignty* as the foundation for Indigenous educational sustainability discussed by Anya Dozier Enos, who is from Santa Clara Pueblo (2015, p. 25-42). She described deep sovereignty as *the way of life* and talked about our Pueblo corn that is more than a food source for us but is linked with our spirits and that is “*cared by the people, and in turn, the corn cares for the people.*” (my emphasis) Her reference to corn resonates with the Pueblo belief that corn is considered our mother and it is our mother’s knowledge that sustains us. She talked about how “education has been used a tool for cultural assimilation for children worldwide, including Native populations in North American...” She also shared Pueblo community-based education projects as ways to strengthen deep sovereignty and provided a theoretical framework for protecting the Pueblo way of life. This Pueblo woman’s knowledge and teachings provide vital tools and resources, which may be used in positive ways to teach and transform the learning processes for Pueblo and Indigenous children. In her words, “[i]nnovation sustains tradition as Pueblo corn continues to be cultivated, to nurture, and to perpetuate the cycle of Pueblo life.”

Through my research and what I learned from my Pueblo sisters, I uphold that Indigenous women’s knowledges and teachings, including Pueblo women’s knowledge and teachings, exist to ensure the survival of Indigenous and Pueblo people. These knowledges reflect our innovation and function through their sharing with family members, relatives, and our larger Indigenous communities to set frameworks for how we live in accordance with the cultural values of the Indigenous or Pueblo people. I offer

here some thoughts regarding how these knowledges function today to sustain us.

**Living together as Indigenous peoples.**

Indigenous people, including Pueblo peoples, generally believe that all life is connected—all species and environments in this world. Pueblo people, for example, live in close-knit communities, meaning they physically live in villages where the homes are either connected through a shared wall or are right next door. These connected homes formed the basis for our ancestral architectural and community planning designs and had a purpose of ensuring safety and for providing space for families to be able to allow children to be raised under the watch and guidance of the child's relatives and family members. The concept of individualism is generally not practiced or promoted within Pueblo communities. There is, however, a concept of community in that Pueblo children are taught about their collective responsibilities to the entire Pueblo community and to be aware that one's language, behavior and actions have an impact on one's family, relatives, community, and life in the universe. Pueblo villages are set up with spaces or plazas where community members gather to either watch or take part in the dances and songs that are held for the benefit of the entire community.

There is much to learn and see in a Pueblo community on a daily basis and still more to learn from when a dance or a ceremony is going on. For example, most times when I am in a Pueblo community, I am a silent observer. I have been taught by my mother and my aunts to be respectful, to watch and learn, and not to be conspicuous or loud in my behavior or words. When a dance is going on, I learn so much by observing



how other women in my community dress, how they fix their hair, the differences in hairstyles that reflect one's position in a society or in the community, how children are treated by their mothers, where the women sit and where the men sit, what is acceptable dress for the particular dance, who is related to who, and I feel a real sense of belonging as the dances start and the songs are being sung. Those are rewarding and treasured learning times.

### **Lifting our voices as Indigenous women.**

I have had the opportunity to travel due to my work addressing violence against Indigenous women. It should be noted that Indigenous women's knowledges and teachings have often led Indigenous women into meetings and international forums where Indigenous women's voices and contributions need to be heard and acknowledged. I have had the opportunity to attend gatherings of Indigenous peoples and to travel with and room with Indigenous women from around the world. We talk, laugh, share stories, listen, cry together, and learn from one another.

When I first attended the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in 2002, I had the honor of meeting Rosalie Little Thunder, a Sicangu Lakota woman. I had been immersed in the world and work being done to address violence against Native women. That world broadened as I learned from Rosalie about environmental issues and made the connections between protection of Mother Earth and protection of Indigenous women. She has journeyed on to the spirit world, and while I miss her words of wisdom, she did leave us with powerful reflections about womanhood:

As a matriarch, I think I could write an entire book on the challenges and responsibilities of womanhood. We are the

creators of “home,” caretakers of the spiritual and physical needs of the tiwahe, or household, and our tiospaye, or extended family. We are teachers, healers, storytellers, peacemakers, problem solvers, and visionaries. The roles and responsibilities in indigenous cultures are different and dynamic. Unless humanity evolves to a point where we are all asexual, I don’t think we will get true equity, whatever that is. I am not sure we should wish for that. Feminism is a Euro-American response to a misogynist problem created by Euro-Americans.

My experience as a Lakota has been that women are the center of male existence. We are matriarchal, not because someone made a conscious decision that this was to be the case. Our ways evolved out of need, in a natural way, according to natural law. My grandfather, my father, and my brothers respected and were all concerned for me as a female child. I had the final word, and I learned to be careful with my influence. I am now the matriarch of a growing tiospaye, or extended family unit. (2004, p. 117-118)

Rosalie’s knowledge and teachings were shared among the members of her tiospaye and Indigenous women and men around the world. The Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, a nonprofit tribal domestic violence and sexual assault organization, brought Rosalie in to co-facilitate a strategic planning session for its members in 2007, and she shared her cultural mapping model as an example of how to help Indigenous people plan and take into consideration the extended family, the community and the rest of the world. The cultural mapping model showed the extended family or tiospaye and included roles and responsibilities of family members along with cultural values and months and seasons of the year.

Rosalie was an intelligent, caring, and compassionate Indigenous woman who reminded me of the broader dynamics related to our knowledges and work as Indigenous women. She deeply understood her own community’s origins, as well as its journeys,

including the trends and phenomena we see today that are translated into violence and trauma within communities. She was vigilant about reminding us that we needed to work with the Indigenous men to help them to find their way so that they could remember their roles and responsibilities to protect women and children and learn to stop abusive behaviors.

**Pueblo women's knowledges in the current world.**

Those types of reminders expressed above are important in the Pueblo world as well. I asked my Pueblo sisters to share their thoughts on whether they believe that Pueblo women's knowledge is important today and received the following very enthusiastic responses:

Well, absolutely I think it's important! Because it just goes back to our basic belief in the balance of everything. It goes back to our basic religious beliefs about the recognition of the Earth Mother, the great Mother Spirit. When we talk about balance, when we speak about our beliefs as native people, as indigenous people—not just indigenous women but as indigenous people—we always put out words like balance, harmony. When you use those words, that means inclusion of everyone, and that's female and male. And in our teachings, that is our teaching, that there's a balance and that includes the female and the male. So that role is still prevalent. It's very important, and sometimes I feel like we forget what it really means. [Ann, Pueblo C]

[Laughing] Hell, yeah it is! Because that's who I am! Because I think every person in our community and in our family should have their interpretation and their experience. We need to be able to listen to all of those experiences and weave them into the way we move in this world. An organization needs the same thing. I can't be making all those decisions in this organization. I need to be able to listen to the experiences of everyone that has a role here. I may have some final decisions, but the interpretation or the

experiences need to be heard and witnessed. Then moving into how we're going to move together collectively. So, women's knowledge, women's voices are needed in every aspect of our society. Because they experience childbirth, they should be able to have a voice in the medical system that regulates or has anything to do with that. Because they are at home, or caring for, or involved in their children's lives, they need to have a voice in their education. I think that wherever we are at, we should be able to voice our experience, our knowledge, our information to bring more richness to whatever is being discussed. [Tina, Pueblo B]

Yes, it's definitely important for me. It's important because I believe that all indigenous people have evolved with the land. We're given instruction by our Creator on how to live on that land. So, for Pueblo people, we carry that knowledge still of how to live on these lands here. For women, that knowledge is how to keep a home, and how to care for your children, and how to care for your family and your community. And overall, be the caretaker and the nurturers of your home and your family and your community. So, I do feel that that knowledge is very important because without it, we might not be... I don't know. I don't want to think about that. I just think that it is very important. [Mary, Pueblo A]

These responses from women in three different generations offer me a great deal of inspiration. They show us that our knowledge is relevant today, and beyond relevant, critical to our balance, as Ann states, and our survival as Pueblo and Indigenous people. Today, I have my answer to the question I posed in my poem so many years ago. It is women's knowledges and teachings that reinvigorate and sustain us, sustaining our ways of life, sustaining life. That is what we know. That is what we believe. That is what we see. That is what carries us forward towards ensuring that Pueblo people will survive and that ensures we shall continue to be Pueblo people.

I think about the power of thought and what is created out of our thoughts and what makes its way into our writing. I am strengthened and rejuvenated in knowing that Thought Woman created so much beauty and life and that the Elder Sister and Younger Sister brought us gifts and lessons about how to live in this world and imparted the knowledges to go with those gifts and lessons. From my perspective, Pueblo women were entrusted to follow in their footsteps to continue what they taught us. These thoughts came to mind as I neared the completion of my dissertation and this book chapter and in keeping with what I have learned, I share them with those who will be reading this.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that you, the reader, will find inspiration, that you will feel compelled to ask yourself some of the same questions that were posed in this research study, and that that you will take action to ensure that Pueblo women's knowledges continue to be planted, cultivated, nurtured, harvested, consumed and saved for re-planting from generation to generation to ensure that Pueblo people continue to be who we are, Pueblo people.

## **Policy Paper – Ensuring the Well-Being of Pueblo Women Through Policy and Practice of Pueblo Core Values**

### **Executive Summary**

What happens when Indigenous nations do not have an overall written policy in place to ensure the well-being of their people, and more specifically, policy that ensures the safety of the most vulnerable, including women in the community? What happens if Indigenous nations do not have their own health policy that supports the safety of women in the community? What are some considerations for creation and adoption of such policy by Indigenous nations? Speaking from the standpoint of a Pueblo Indian woman from one of the 19 Pueblo nations of New Mexico, I explore considerations and implications for policy development, from the foundations of Indigenous and Pueblo core values, that seeks to address the well-being of vulnerable populations, particularly Indigenous women affiliated with and living in Indigenous nations. I speak from my own experiences as an advocate for Indigenous women's rights worldwide, from my epistemological roots as a Kewa woman, and as an attorney-scholar-researcher, and I use my research findings in order to inform the ideas I outline in this policy paper. In this work, I include discussion around the connections between the establishment of policies and tribal governance, how these are linked to tribal self-determination, and our core values. This policy paper is written with Pueblo communities in mind and includes additional considerations for those Pueblos and Indigenous nations that currently operate with few written policies or laws in place.

### **Pueblo Contexts**

I am an Indigenous woman from Kewa, one of the nineteen Pueblos in New Mexico.

While my intent in this paper and dissertation is not to write about Kewa (nor do I speak for Kewa) or provide statistics and demographic figures that are deficiency-focused, I do believe it is important to highlight my own positionality in relation to the Pueblos.

Kewa is one of the remaining Pueblo Indian nations that has been able to survive and thrive despite the onslaught of colonialism that began when the Spaniards came to the lands where we live. Kewa is located about forty miles north of Albuquerque and the main village is located close to the Rio Grande River. Kewa is my home community and is the place where I am connected to no matter where I may physically be.

I am a survivor of sexual assault and domestic violence as well as an advocate, an attorney, a tribal court judge, a mother, aunt, cousin, daughter, and grandmother. Personal impetus for this policy paper comes from my experience working for a number of Pueblo Indian nations, including those considered to be among the most “traditional” of the 19 Pueblo Indian nations in New Mexico. Note that I use the term “traditional” here as it is used in the 19 Pueblos, which tends to mean long-established, customary or less changed over a long period of time. However, I am aware that the term has been critiqued by other scholars for its potential restrictions (Sumida Huaman, 2015).

For the purposes of this policy section of my dissertation, I argue for the need for written policies that ensure the well-being (defined by all community members and where the voices of women are heard) of Pueblo women within the larger context of Pueblo or Indigenous values of respect for Pueblo women and respect for Mother Earth. My discussion necessarily includes taking a look at the relationship between respect for earth

and women: What did and does respect for the earth mother look like? What did and does *respect for Pueblo women* look like in our communities? Based on my research, I relay grave implications for the world, for Pueblo communities and for Indigenous peoples worldwide if Indigenous communities do not make the real connections between the two. While recommendations included here are written with the intention to share this policy paper with Pueblo communities, it is my hope that there are pieces that will be useful to other Indigenous peoples. First, I acknowledge the voices of the Pueblo women I interviewed in my dissertation research who played a huge part in helping me to decide the focus of this policy paper. Those Pueblo women, from three different generations – grandmother age, mother age, and daughter age – are each involved in work and activism that focuses on the protection of water, the environment, the lands, and the overall health and well-being of Indigenous and Pueblo women and Mother Earth. The other sources that inform this policy paper are the written and oral resources used to complete this dissertation, including articles and books from my literature review and my own perspectives based on my life-long learning experiences.

Initially when choosing a topic for my policy paper I considered the major themes that run through my advocacy work with Pueblo and Indigenous communities. This brought me to a few options—whether to focus solely on food and healthy diets within Pueblo communities; educational initiatives for Pueblo children; tribal membership and enrollment policies; or safety of Pueblo women in our communities. I chose to write about the safety of Pueblo women in our communities from a well-being-in-policy perspective because I am a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault and a long-



time advocate who has been working to end violence against women for over 24 years. This is personal for me and for many other Pueblo and Indigenous women. In those years, I have seen much progress take place in raising awareness about domestic violence and in recent years, awareness is being raised about sexual assault through discussions about human trafficking and missing and murdered women. Change sometimes happens slowly and policy changes, whether written or unwritten, have the power to support the way that change happens.

### **Issue Description and Initial steps**

#### **What is “well-being” and how does that relate to safety of Pueblo women?**

An initial step towards answering this question would be to define what a formal written policy is and I would begin by obtaining input from Pueblo community members to discuss policy development. In moving forward in this way, I would take into consideration that I am not a fluent Keres language speaker so I am aware that such a presentation to people in Pueblo communities and the ensuing discussion may take a little longer so that some concepts are discussed and explained in the language spoken in the particular Pueblo community. Use of a given Pueblo’s language would make discussion much easier to understand and is the correct and respectful approach. As I am not fluent, I would need to use the English language and hopefully have someone with me, preferably someone from the Pueblo community, to explain concepts in the particular Pueblo’s language whether it be Keres, Tiwa, Tewa, Towa or Zuni.

When I think of what a formal written well-being policy is, especially around well-being and women, I am thinking that such a policy must contain a vision statement

on well-being for the Pueblo. What is well-being for this particular community? Has it been defined in the past, by whom, and who gets to define it today? Whose voices are missing? How do we envision well-being—meaning, where do we see the well-being of this Pueblo, specifically the well-being of Pueblo women, a year from now, or 5, 10, 20 years from now? Does the definition of well-being also take into consideration the safety of women in the Pueblo? An important part of such a policy is to have plans and actions designed by the people of that Pueblo which will move them towards realizing their vision of well-being and safety for the Pueblo women in the community. Defining safety must also undergo the same line of questioning.

In defining “well-being,” I look at the definition of “health policy,” which for the purposes of this policy paper is one way to start informing what a policy on well-being might look like. “Health policy,” as I see it, is defined as the “decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific [healthcare](#) goals within a society.”<sup>[1]</sup> According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), an explicit health policy can achieve several things: it defines a vision for the future; it outlines priorities and the expected roles of different groups; and it builds consensus and informs people.<sup>[1]</sup> It would then follow that a policy on the well-being of Pueblo women is also defined as the decisions, plans, and actions that are undertaken to achieve specific goals within a society that ensure well-being of Pueblo women. At this point, it is interesting to note that WHO has established an international health policy that applies to all of its member states, which includes the United States. However, the United States’ health policy is ever changing, even though they are a member of the WHO, and it would be interesting to

conduct a study in the near future to determine whether the United States applies international standards and policies to American Indian nations within its nation-state borders. My first guess would be that the United States does not do this. This means that American Indian nations, in exercising their right to self-determination have a window and can and should develop a formal health policy or in other words, formal written policies that consider the safety and well-being of women.

I also looked to another example of a definition of health from the perspectives of Pueblo people who attended a Pueblo convocation and were asked about their ideas of Pueblo health:

“Pueblo health is not just about maintaining the physical, such as through exercise and medication, nor is it just about individual health; rather, the concept is sophisticated and complex in that it is connected to a *total Pueblo way of life* that is communally focused. Trying to analyze and compartmentalize (i.e., body, mind, spirit, and heart) participants’ responses became inherently problematic because each idea is interconnected and makes up what Pueblo people view as a whole healthy person and community.” (M. Suina 2016, p. 76)

The shared ideas of a total Pueblo way of life includes everything that happens in a Pueblo person’s life. The Pueblo participants at this Pueblo convocation appeared to be referring to how everyone and everything is connected in the Pueblo community and the ideas they expressed about health were interconnected which I see is a reflection of the interconnections in Pueblo communities.

From my own epistemological view, well-being in Pueblo communities is that

good feeling a person gets when connected with other people in the Pueblo community, knowing that there is safety, love and caring for one another. When I think about well-being, I think about the feelings of connectedness that come when I wake up in the morning, think about the dreams I just had, look outside the window to see whether it is sunny or overcast, and look around at the houses where my mom lives at Kewa and see children going to school or outside playing while they are waiting for the bus. It is also that connectedness when walking in the Pueblo village and you pass another person and both of you greet each other or when you are driving and you raise a finger or your hand up from the steering wheel to acknowledge the person in the other car as you pass each other. Well-being is that feeling that happens when in the plaza watching a dance, sitting there with others, greeting each other and sharing snacks as the day goes on, hearing the songs, or participating in the dance, laughing and talking with each other. That sense of well-being is recognizing that you belong to that place, that you are happy, at peace, and whole.

I also define well-being in Pueblo communities from this Pueblo woman's perspective. In that definition, Pueblo women are safe to walk alone in their communities without fear of being sexually harassed or abused and are safe from fear of physical and sexual abuse in their homes. Pueblo women's homes are the places where Pueblo women's knowledges are taught, shared, modeled and passed on to children. Pueblo homes are places where Pueblo values are demonstrated on a daily basis throughout a Pueblo person's life. Pueblo well-being from this Pueblo woman's perspective means that our homes are also safe places where we can be free from fear of harm, where we

can be comfortable, where the food we cook becomes infused with the good thoughts and vibes that come from the feelings of security, love, respect, and that Pueblo homes are spaces demonstrating interconnections with the rest of the Pueblo community. Pueblo homes and Pueblo communities are spaces where there is no violence against women.

### **Written and oral policies.**

In my work at a few Pueblos, I had the opportunity to view the internal operations of tribal programs and governing systems. In my work, I also observed that there is not necessarily formal written tribal policy to ensure the well-being of Pueblo women—whether specifically for some individual Pueblos or across the 19 Pueblo nations as a politically unified group. Such policy includes that which functions to address the safety needs of the women in Pueblo community. In some cases, there is no formal written tribal policy because the Pueblo operates according to oral tradition, which is a critical part of the cultural history of Pueblo peoples, meaning that most policies, laws and regulations are unwritten and are delivered to the people in the community primarily through oral means, most often through delivery by the tribal officials. There are a few exceptions where policies may be set forth in Tribal Council resolutions or written directives issued by the Pueblo Governor or Lt. Governor; however, there are very few of those types of policies. For example, a former Governor issued a “Notice to the Community” to let people in the community know that they should not be dumping their trash in the arroyos or corrals and they were responsible for cleaning and hauling their trash away to the correct disposal location. The notice from the Governor is an example of an internal policy that Pueblo community members should know about yet it appears that there may

have been an issue at the Pueblo where people needed to be reminded in writing. Another example may be seen in the signs posted at the entrances to some of the Pueblos which state: No Picture Taking Allowed. No Recordings or Cameras allowed. No Videotaping Allowed. No Sketching or Drawings Allowed. Those signs reflect policies or laws that are in effect for the particular Pueblo but are not codified into written laws. Those types of policies or laws are intended to inform visitors to the Pueblo that those are the laws of that Pueblo and are also examples of the Pueblo's expression of their rights to self-determination. Those types of policies or laws are also derived from core values of showing respect for the land by keeping it trash-free and the core values of maintaining respect for the Pueblo way of life through the various prohibitions made to visitors to the Pueblos.

In general, we might ask if Pueblo Indian nations that are considered to be "traditional" have formal written policies. At this time I believe it is doubtful; however, I would argue that such policies might be compiled taking into consideration language contained in Tribal Council resolutions. Hypothetically speaking, the process in place at a Pueblo might be that a person or group of persons could request access to review Tribal Council resolutions, which might be under lock and key and only accessible with permission granted by the Governor. In such an example, access would be very limited and would vary from year to year depending on the Governor and Lt. Governor who are appointed for the year. There may be Governors who might understand the need to review the Tribal Council resolutions for information, and then there may be Governors who are very protective of tribal records, including Tribal Council resolutions, and those

Governors would be hesitant to provide access. There is also the possibility that Governors or Pueblo leadership do not understand or agree with whether there is a need for written policy development and perhaps the connections between Tribal Council resolutions and policy development have not been clearly made.

As one of the ways to address the above, we can look to the work of The Leadership Institute at the Santa Fe Indian School, which established the innovative and highly regarded Summer Policy Academy (SPA) for tribal youth in New Mexico. The SPA was established in order to cultivate policy knowledge (tribal, state, and federal) amongst the new generations of Pueblo and other tribal youth in the state who will take on leadership positions in their communities (Abeita, 2017; Chosa, 2017). Those Pueblo and other tribal youth who participate in the SPA learn about their roles and responsibilities as Pueblo and tribal youth towards their home communities which includes policy development and creating projects that will benefit their community. Recent examples of the types of projects that have come out of the SPA include language revitalization, health and well-being, farming and agriculture, caring for livestock, children's education and mentoring, prevention of dating and teen violence, to name a few a few. One of the most important aspects of the Summer Policy Academy is the incorporation and recognition of core values throughout the classes, lectures, field visits, and community projects.

There are other possible ways to assess and compile written policies that ensure the safety and well-being of Pueblo women in a community. One way might be through the various tribal programs that provide health-related services to the people in a Pueblo

community. These include tribal programs, such as the Pueblo's behavioral health services, Social Services, the Senior Center, and the CHR (community health representative). Most of these tribal programs operate under either state or federal grant funding. These programs must submit applications to the funders verifying the need for services to be provided to the people in the Pueblo community. These programs also collect information on the types of services they provide, so they each have a part of the overall picture of the health or well-being needs for the community. Unfortunately, the programs often do not share information with each other, and sometimes there is territorialism within various tribal programs. Tribal programs may also be reluctant to release information to anyone because of a Pueblo's strict confidentiality policy or state or federal laws regarding confidentiality. However, those types of challenges may be addressed by getting back to core values of connecting with one another, talking with each other, and sharing with each other in ways that reflect respect and concern for the well-being of the entire community.

Many contextual questions came to mind when I was thinking about the issues related to developing written policies that ensure the well-being and safety of Pueblo women, which necessarily include core values of respect for women and the earth Mother. For example, I asked myself,

- What is the current environment in Pueblo communities where Pueblo leadership is primarily composed of men? What are the core values reflected in those communities?



- Did attendance at Indian boarding school and other traumatic historical events have any direct influence on the beliefs, values and resulting behaviors of Pueblo people who attended boarding school and their descendants?
- From where do existing beliefs and practices that might be viewed as patriarchal come?
- Do patriarchal beliefs, particularly those borrowed from the Spanish colonizers, have an influence on Pueblo people's attitudes and beliefs and core values?
- How do those patriarchal beliefs contrast with the matriarchal foundations of Pueblo society?
- Will the topic of this policy paper have any type of impact on the safety of my family, my relatives and people in my home community?

From my perspective, what appears to be a fairly straightforward statement and belief expressed in the title of this policy paper, “Ensuring the Well-Being of Pueblo Women Through Policy and Practice of Pueblo Core Values” might not be so clearly demonstrated in many Pueblo communities. The more recent work of Laguna scholar, June Lorenzo (2017) demonstrates this, especially as she examines Pueblo law in relation to Spanish colonizing laws and their motives, which ultimately transformed the way Pueblo women enjoy rights (or not) today. I, along with many community members, wonder whether Pueblo communities, particularly Pueblo leadership have prioritized economic development, housing, interacting with the various state and federal entities who are requesting consultations or participation in meetings on a daily basis? There is no denying these are important concerns. At the same time, we can be reflective—Are

our communities so focused on traditional, seasonal and recurring community events that daily issues concerning the safety of women and children in the community are not being addressed adequately, except when tribal programs sponsor activities such as “child abuse awareness month” or “domestic violence awareness month”? Over the past decade, I have had the opportunity to work with tribal programs, and I have rarely seen any grassroots individual community-sponsored (not tribal-government program sponsored) events that focus on the well-being and safety of Pueblo women. I have rarely witnessed events organized by Indigenous men in Pueblo communities that focus on the well-being and safety of Pueblo women. When they are held, events are organized by Indigenous and Pueblo women or advocacy organizations, even those events that are endorsed by a particular tribal program.

Currently in the world outside of Pueblo communities, women are finally coming forward to talk about sexual harassment and sexual abuse and they are naming those who have committed disrespectful acts of violence towards them. Is this happening in Pueblo country? Why or why not? I am aware that these are loaded questions—historically, politically, and socially. As far as I personally know, at this time, it does not appear that Pueblo women in particular are coming forward to publicly name those who have sexually abused or sexually harassed them. It would be interesting to learn how this is being navigated in other Indigenous communities that may share some of the same characteristics of Pueblo communities—tight knit, hierarchical, place-based, etc.

### **Need for the Issue**

The questions and issues outlined in previous sections lead us to ask why there is

a need for Pueblo Indian nations to adopt policy that addresses the issues concerning the well-being and safety of Pueblo women. Is there a connection between my observation of the need and the existing lack of policy, and furthermore, what of the relationship between core values of respect for earth mother and women in addressing any gaps?

When Pueblo and Indigenous people talk about the earth mother, there is much reverence and respect expressed in words, songs, prayers and behavior (protocols). Pueblo and Indigenous people share a common teaching or belief in the core values of deep respect for the earth mother, the sun, the moon, the stars and all living beings, including Pueblo and Indigenous women. At the same time, based on what we know in Pueblo communities regarding women, we might ask if there is a corresponding respect for Pueblo women that is actively practiced through the behavior of people in the Pueblo communities? If not, why is this issue not being discussed? Is it because it is considered a woman's issue, or because the connection between Pueblo women and the earth mother is not being made, or because this issue is considered a social issue and is not at the top of the list of priorities that Pueblo communities are dealing with?

In Pueblo stories that I have heard and will generalize for the sake of conversation here, Pueblo people were placed on the earth mother with explicit instructions on how to live in the Fourth world they had journeyed to from within the earth mother past the First, Second and Third worlds. In preparation for their emergence into the Fourth world where we live today, Pueblo people were instructed and given the core values to have respect for all life, for the earth mother, the father sun, the stars, the moon and everything in the universe. Those lessons are often repeated through songs, through stories, and through

our behavior as we go through our lives each day. Those lessons and stories led to the development of unwritten policies that have been carried down from generation to generation.

Even though we, Pueblo people, have these daily and regular reminders or in other words, unwritten policies (more commonly referred to as “instructions”), our behaviors and actions are changing, often towards disrespect for women and perhaps due to influences and learned behaviors from the world outside our Pueblo communities. This has been described in the research that has been emerging on residential schools in Canada and boarding schools in the U.S. (Bombay, et al. 2014). In the world we live in today, there is now a need for written policies because some unwritten policies or rules or lessons that were carried down from generation to generation have also been changing and transforming over time and in some instances are forgotten. The following are a few examples of how our behaviors, actions, attitudes, and practices have shifted in Pueblo communities and perhaps in other Indigenous communities and how this shift may have an overall impact on our well-being, creating the need for written policies.

**A few examples of need for policies to ensure safety of Pueblo women.**

- 1) In the work to end violence against Indigenous women that I have been involved in over the past 25+ years both in Pueblo country and around the world in other Indigenous communities, there are high rates of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. Some Pueblo Indian nations have established programs like the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council (ENIPC) Peacekeepers program which has developed services for victims of domestic violence that include advocacy,

legal assistance for domestic violence victims, a batterer's re-education program, and a domestic violence prosecution. The Peacekeepers domestic violence program is funded primarily through federal funding and program staff are therefore prohibited from lobbying for tribal, state and federal policies that would enhance the safety of Pueblo women. Those types of federal restrictions imposed on these types of programs are counterintuitive and contrary to upholding the core values of respect for Pueblo women when those who are working to address violence against women cannot take part in development of policies that would uphold those core values.

- 2) Another type of response to ensuring the safety of Pueblo women is the work being done to address sexual assault. Some Pueblo nations have established Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) programs intended to keep track of individuals who have been convicted of sexual assault crimes, who have served time in prison, and who have been released back into their home Pueblo communities. In one Pueblo community, I helped to establish the Pueblo's SORNA program and found that there were a higher number of sex offenders per square mile compared to the number of sex offenders per square mile in the more populated area of Albuquerque. This was alarming to know that there were so many convicted sex offenders living in that small, close-knit Pueblo community, with some sex offenders living within a few feet of where children play and gather on a daily basis. When I presented the SORNA program and proposed Ordinance establishing the SORNA program to the Tribal Council, I noted that

the tribal leaders had questions and concerns focused on the safety of children and did not raise concerns about the safety of women in the community even though a few of the sex offenders who were required to register and report in on a regular basis had been convicted of crimes committed against women, not children. This made me wonder whether it is easier for tribal leaders to talk about and take action to protect children in their communities instead of taking action to protect the women in their communities? This tells me that perhaps there is a real need for policies to be written and adopted to ensure the safety of both women and children in those Pueblo communities that have established SORNA programs. Such policies would be derived and connected to the core values of respect for all life, including respect for Pueblo women, who are bearers of life.

- 3) A group of grandmothers from some of the Tewa speaking Pueblo Indian nations founded Tewa Women United (TWU), a non-profit organization located in Espanola, New Mexico, partly as a result of their need to have a place where Indigenous women would be able to come together to support one another and organize outside of Pueblo communities where Pueblo women's voices were not being heard. Out of those initial gatherings of Tewa grandmothers, TWU obtained funding to work on addressing sexual abuse of children and women. I learned about TWU when they joined the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, a tribal domestic violence and sexual assault non-profit non-governmental organization, which I helped to co-found. I have been on the TWU board of directors for several years now and have seen TWU flourish from that

initial grant to address sexual assault to an organization that now includes projects focused on child sexual abuse, sexual abuse, environmental issues, the grandmothers, doulas/birthing, working with girls at the Santa Fe Indian School, a community garden in Espanola, and advocacy at the state and federal levels for policies and laws related to each of the issues. Over the years of TWU's herstory, it has been Pueblo and other Indigenous women who have led the way to address patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that are widespread in most Pueblo and adjacent bordertown communities.

In addition to these local examples, there are examples from other Indigenous communities from which we can also learn.

**Examples of issues of well-being from Aotearoa (New Zealand) similar to those in Pueblos.**

- 1) I, together with a few others from the Pueblo PhD cohort, attended the annual Kapa Haka festival in February 2017, an event where Maori groups from various regions across the country shared their songs and dances in the hopes of winning the distinctions of winning top honors for the various types of talent areas. I took note of the various types of food being sold in the food trucks and food stands because I was looking for healthy options. I was alarmed by the number of places that were selling varieties of fried and fast foods because Maori people have high rates of diabetes similar to the high rates of diabetes we are seeing in Pueblo communities. It was good to see the number of places that offered traditional Maori dishes, primarily different types of seafood and shellfish. In many Pueblo

communities, fast food stands are the norm where primarily fried foods are offered at low cost. During the time that I worked in two Pueblo communities, it was a challenge to find healthy food items for lunch so I usually either took my own lunch or went home for lunch. At Pueblo feast days and other large events such as weddings and baptisms, I have noticed an increase in food that is not healthy such as salads and desserts that are loaded with sugar, fried foods such as hamburgers and hot dogs, and fast foods. I provide this example to illustrate the need for policies to ensure the well-being and health of Maori and Pueblo peoples. It is my belief that when a person feels well or healthy, the person is more mindful and aware of their behaviors and actions, and if the person is grounded in core values, that person's actions and body will reflect those core values.

- 2) When we were in Aotearoa, we visited Mount Manaunganui which is located on the east coast of the north island. The seaport was busy and we saw stacks and stacks of logs being shipped out. We learned later that trees, not native to Aotearoa, were planted and harvested on a regular cycle and that these foreign trees were crowding out the native plants, trees and wildlife. The loss of native trees has created a diminished supply of wood that is used by Maori people for traditional and cultural purposes. This example illustrates the need for policies to be created to protect trees and plant life that are native to Aotearoa because of their use for traditional and cultural purposes that ensure the well-being of Maori people. From the core value of respect for all life and the teachings that come



from those native trees with the types of knowledges that are derived from those precious trees, it becomes vital to put policies in place for protection and tree survival.

My colleagues and I also visited another Maori village located at the base of the town of Rotorua. Our Maori host shared that the Maori village was there first and that the town of Rotorua, which has become a huge tourist attraction because of the numerous hot pools in the area, grew out from their village. Our host also shared that they were not able to swim or fish in the lake by their Maori village anymore. The lake had become polluted by people throwing their rubbish and by companies dumping their waste into the waters that feed the lake. This example illustrates the need for policies to be put into place to protect the waters in Aotearoa. Many Maori cultural practices and activities involve water and when it is polluted and inaccessible, those cultural activities cease to be practiced which in turn impacts the well-being of the Maori people of that village in Rotorua. When the well-being of a people is impacted in this way, the well-being of the women is also impacted. Looking to core values of honoring the waters, leads to protecting the waters, and leads to the continuance of cultural practices, including ensuring the safety of Maori and other women.

### **Approaches, Implications, Recommendations**

In this policy paper, I argue that there is a need for Pueblo and Indigenous people to act according to the core values of respect for all life, which includes having respect for Pueblo and Indigenous women. I am concerned about the future of the world we live in

today. I am concerned about whether we will have a world that future generations of Pueblo and Indigenous peoples can live in. I am also concerned about whether future generations of Indigenous women and girls will be able to be safe in their homes and communities because it appears that the core value of respect for women has greatly diminished along with the respect for Mother Earth.

Reflecting on what I learned professionally, academically, and personally, I have become increasingly concerned about the well-being of Indigenous and Pueblo women and girls. Having been to Aotearoa twice before, I had learned from those previous visits in 2003 and 2006, that Maori people were also being impacted by colonial practices, behaviors, values and laws that created so many social, economic and health disparities. In 2017, as a participant in the Indigenous Research Conference, I was amazed by the wealth of research being conducted to address those disparities from many angles and perspectives. A well-known Maori leader, Graham Smith, shared, “Colonization/dominance has not gone away; more often it has simply changed shape.” I see those results of those impacts on Indigenous people. Despite these challenges, as Pueblo people, we must do our best to protect who we are and what we have in our Pueblo communities. There have been disastrous changes in our diets and lifestyles have resulted in high rates of diabetes, heart disease, alcoholism, and cancer—in addition to the issues I have described regarding well-being of women. At the same time, I am encouraged that we still have resources—we have our traditional foods, farming practices and still discuss our values that guide us and keep us strong.

**How are Pueblo nations responding to the overall health or well-being needs of the communities and are there challenges to the responses?**

Several tribal programs exist to respond to the health or well-being needs in some Pueblo communities. The CHR (Community Health Resources) program has been in existence for a number of years and they provide testing for diabetics, for those with high blood pressure and they provide transportation services for community members who need to go to see a health practitioner away from the Pueblo in Santa Fe or Albuquerque. The CHR program also provides rabies vaccinations and spaying and neutering services for animals.

The Kewa Health Opportunities Program (KHOP) has also been in existence in my own Pueblo for a few years and receives federal funding. The KHOP program has brought in thousands of dollars over the years to focus on healthy and active lifestyles. In 2015, initiatives were launched that included a very active summer program for the entire community, an after school program for youth during the school year, the hiring of summer interns for the summer program, and the purchase of fitness equipment and supplies for recreational activities, including ski equipment, snowboarding equipment, golf clubs, bicycles and other items to support active and healthy activities in the community. Recently, the KHOP program has moved forward with creating educational awareness activities around diabetes, sponsoring healthy food preparation workshops, and co-sponsoring other tribal program activities such as monthly run/walks in the Pueblo community.

I usually run by myself in the area where the KHOP program was sponsoring

walks and runs during the week last year. One day I returned to my car and found a bottle of water with a snack and a note letting me know that the KHOP program was inviting me to join them on the days that they run or walk. It was very nice to receive that encouragement because it reinforced the connections that I have to the people in my Pueblo community. After that, I made an effort to attend a few of their community fun runs/walks and have received text invites from the Program. Each time I have participated, there is no judgment about how fast or slow I run, there are connections made with people I have not seen in awhile or new connections are made, and the KHOP program staff are always welcoming and supportive. The last time I attended their sponsored walk/run event, I was pleased to see that they provided a healthy post-run/post-walk snack of whole wheat toast with an avocado spread sprinkled with feta cheese. I was also pleased to see community members there of all ages who either ran or walked. Those types of events take us out on the land, into the fresh air, and help us to connect with each other and all life around us. Those are examples of how well-being is being actively promoted and supported by KHOP in the Kewa Pueblo community and demonstrate how people in the community are strengthening their connections to each other. Those types of activities may be enhanced by highlighting core values of respect for all life, respect for the land we walk or run on, respect for the air we breathe, respect for the water we drink, and respect for women and children.

Also in my own Pueblo, the Kewa Family Wellness Center houses substance abuse programs and prevention programs. There are three clinicians and a traditional counselor on staff and an acting Director of the Center. The Prevention program staff

have projects such as tobacco cessation, suicide prevention and there is a Prevention Coalition which is composed of representatives from some of the tribal programs, council members and community members. Within the Kewa Family Wellness Center, there are two areas where community members can come in to use the equipment to make jewelry or pottery or other arts and crafts. The behavioral health services provided are in partnership with the Tribal Court, Social Services, and the Kewa Pueblo Health Clinic. Similarly, the Pueblo's Social Services program also responds to the social needs of the Pueblo community by providing assistance with counseling and advocacy for victims of domestic violence, general assistance, and child welfare assistance.

Also in my Pueblo, there was an external entity, the John Hopkins Feasts for the Future program, which worked with the Santo Domingo Pueblo Early Childhood Learning Center (HeadStart) and the Santo Domingo Pueblo Elementary School to promote farming and traditional food consumption. They worked with the students and the Governors' office to create a community farm. The community farm was created to allow space for community members for farming, teaching and a place for outdoor cooking with a Pueblo oven and other cooking areas. They also collaborated with the Women's Voices (coalition) group, which I co-founded in my community, to teach women how to make blue corn pancakes and a hot drink made from blue corn, both traditional items, and healthy food options.

From this overall review of the health care services taken from examples in my own Kewa Pueblo, there are some existing infrastructure and initiatives offering health care. However, these programs are not self-sustaining, tend to offer supports and

programs in typical piecemeal fashion, which follows the trends in national health care policy while not necessarily exploring community-based definitions of well-being and sustainable programming, particularly for the most vulnerable populations. As a community, we can change this by being more mindful of the types of funding we are seeking to support programs that reflect the needs and visions we have for our community. We can also be mindful that our visions for our communities, being based in Pueblo core values, would mean that we take measures to ensure that those programs are operating to demonstrate Pueblo core values.

The core values I talk about include respect for all life, generosity and sharing, acknowledging relationships to each other and all life, love, compassion, faith, understanding, spirituality, balance, peace and empathy. It is my belief that when people behave in ways that reflect these core values, especially behaving respectfully towards women, then there can be no issues or concerns about violence against women in a Pueblo community.

#### **Additional Recommendations/Considerations.**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted by the United States during President Barack Obama's presidential term of office. The UNDRIP has been adopted by all of the nation/States around the world and includes standards that those States are currently being challenged to uphold. In the United States, the UNDRIP is not being implemented. One avenue towards implementation is for Indian nations to adopt the standards in the UNDRIP in developing policies and laws that respect the rights of Indigenous peoples in their communities.

Article 22.2 of the UNDRIP provides as follows:

States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

Although that Article is focused on States such as the United States and other countries around the world, the Article also provides guidance to Indigenous nations who could include this language in their own tribal policies and laws. It would be helpful for the Governors (Governor, Lt. Governor and tribal officials) and the Tribal Council to have a better understanding of the UNDRIP to determine how to use the UNDRIP to serve the Pueblo's best interests. It is very likely that some of the Tribal Council members have attended the National Congress of American Indians meetings and they might have attended briefings on the UNDRIP. However, with this international instrument and with federal laws, most Pueblos, which do not have a policy person on staff to assist the Governors and Tribal Council to understand the UNDRIP, it may reasonably be said that most of the Tribe's leadership does not understand the UNDRIP and how to implement it. If they had an understanding of the UNDRIP and adopted policies aligned with those in the UNDRIP, it would place them in a better position for future tribal consultations and dialogues with the United States which has a federal trust responsibility to serve the best interests of American Indians and Alaska Natives that includes ensuring the safety of American Indian and Alaska Native women to be free from violence. Pueblo nations can adopt their own written policies that reflect the core values, traditions and voices of the people of their Pueblo. This would be a huge step forward to achieving self-determination

and would serve as the basis from which the United States would need to respect when working with those Pueblo nations.

### **Discussion: Importance of Written Policies and Laws**

In many Pueblos, new leadership is appointed annually—a new Governor, a new Lt. Governor and tribal officials every year in late December. This constant changing of tribal leadership often results in changing tribal policies for the year depending on what the Governor and Lt. Governor want to accomplish that year. Within the changing leadership, tribal programs, including health programs, may become apprehensive about who they will be working with the next year, how much education they will need to provide to the new leadership about their programs, and there is always the possibility that some tribal program staff may be terminated or shifted to a different program. Having a formal written health policy in place would help to ensure some type of continuity towards achieving a shared vision regarding the health and creating preserved space for working towards addressing the well-being and safety of women. Such continuity would ensure that addressing the well-being and safety of Pueblo women in the community is a priority and would be a clear demonstration of the core value of respect for Pueblo women.

I am aware that I have been considered perhaps too forward thinking and that change takes time to achieve. Yet when we do not have a written policy in place, we end up in reactive mode instead of a planning mode. Our health and well-being needs appear to be increasing as we are experiencing more concerns in our communities, including substance abuse especially among the youth. We are also experiencing more cancer-



related deaths. Over the past year in my own Pueblo, there were at least two to three deaths in a week in short timeframes. Yet, we have the perception that we are “okay” because we have maintained our traditional cultural practices. I would venture to state that many of us are unaware of what the Healthy People 2010 initiative is, which is part of the United States national health policy towards American Indians.

**Importance of written laws in the face of United States policies.**

An even stronger step that individual Pueblos and the 19 Pueblos together can take is to put their own health or well-being policy, including that which concerns well-being and safety of women, into written law. Yet there may be resistance due to the long-standing and respected practice of orally carrying forward our unwritten policies. However, the needs of the people in the community have changed over time, and the relationship of the United States government with American Indian nations, including Pueblo nations, has changed drastically away from upholding the federal trust relationship. As a legal practitioner, I am concerned that there may come a time in the future when the United States, especially under the current racist and misogynist executive leadership, when further federal standards and federal regulations will be put in place to determine and limit the identities and powers of American Indian nations. An example of concern is that there are trends in Congress that have been guiding and supporting American Indians nations to create justice systems with written laws and written policies that are similar to non-Indian justice systems. When those types of systems are established, most often, those types of justice systems do not always reflect

Indigenous core values. If we, Pueblo nations, Pueblo peoples, and Pueblo women, were to be truly acknowledged and respected, then perhaps we would not have these imminent concerns.

### **Conclusion: Self-Determination and Customary Laws and Policies**

Another Article in the UNDRIP supports the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and states,

Article 3 Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Customary laws and practices may serve as the foundation for a Pueblo's policy that ensures the safety and well-being of Pueblo women and children. This may be done without revealing our customary laws and practices and may be accomplished from a Pueblo values perspective. If we take the approach through prayer and being mindful about where we are in this world, our positionalities, and if we are able to look at what the stories and songs that have been passed down over time immemorial, we can create written policy that reflects the values of the Pueblo and demonstrates respect for Pueblo women. We will experience challenges and obstacles and by incorporating the values of respect, love, and community, we can be strong together to demonstrate that we are indeed a true self-determining Indian nation.

I recently traveled with my Pueblo Phd cohort colleagues to Winnipeg, Canada and had a window seat. Flying over the earth provides a perspective to see where

Indigenous ancestral lands have been taken into ownership whether it be tribal, state or federal. Ownership is clearly demarked by the patterns created by fences, roads and other man-made markers that may be seen as boxes and circles upon the lands. Those boxes and circles upon the lands, the fences, borders, the resulting concepts of ownership, brought to mind the type of confinements and control that come into play when talking about how Indigenous and Pueblo women are treated. On a daily basis in the current world, we are being bombarded with stories about Indigenous women who are treated without respect, being confined, controlled, assaulted, owned and/or trafficked, kept within borders or within homes, and are being abused physically and emotionally.

I emphasize here that Pueblo and Indigenous peoples have the ability to do something to change those stories, to plant the seeds for long-lasting written policies that will underscore Pueblo and Indigenous core values of respect for all life, and respect for Pueblo and Indigenous women. We have the ability to cultivate those seeds by demonstrating, through our behaviors, those core values that include respect for Pueblo women in our communities.

Lastly, there are other policy papers that I would like to write someday when I feel safe to do so; meaning without fear of repercussions for me and my family or fear for the safety of other Pueblo and Indigenous women. Those other policy papers would also reflect my ongoing thoughts and hopes around advocacy for the respect of Pueblo and Indigenous women. If that day does not come in my lifetime, it is my hope that another Pueblo woman or a group of Pueblo women may be inspired to take up a certain topic that I am presently not able to openly and publicly address. I have learned that I am able

to present myself in a different light when I am away from my Pueblo community. For example, I have been able to be an outspoken advocate for Indigenous women's human rights both in international and national forums. In the Pueblo community where I come from, the expectations for who I am as a Pueblo woman from that community are different and I cannot be outspoken and must often be silent. It is my hope that these policy thoughts I present here will be received by readers without any pre-judgments and with open minds.

Thank you for listening, for reading, for being with me as I share these concerns, issues, and recommendations in the hopes that positive social change and transformation may occur in ways that reflect our Indigenous and Pueblo core values and on our own terms for self-determination.

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